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November 1991

**BATTLE OF THE HAPPY FACES—**
**Multiplayer Maze Combat on the Game Boy**

**Spine-Tingling Software**

**TONS OF REVIEWS!**

**MAPS AND TIPS:**
**Renovation Products' *Gaiares*, Part II**



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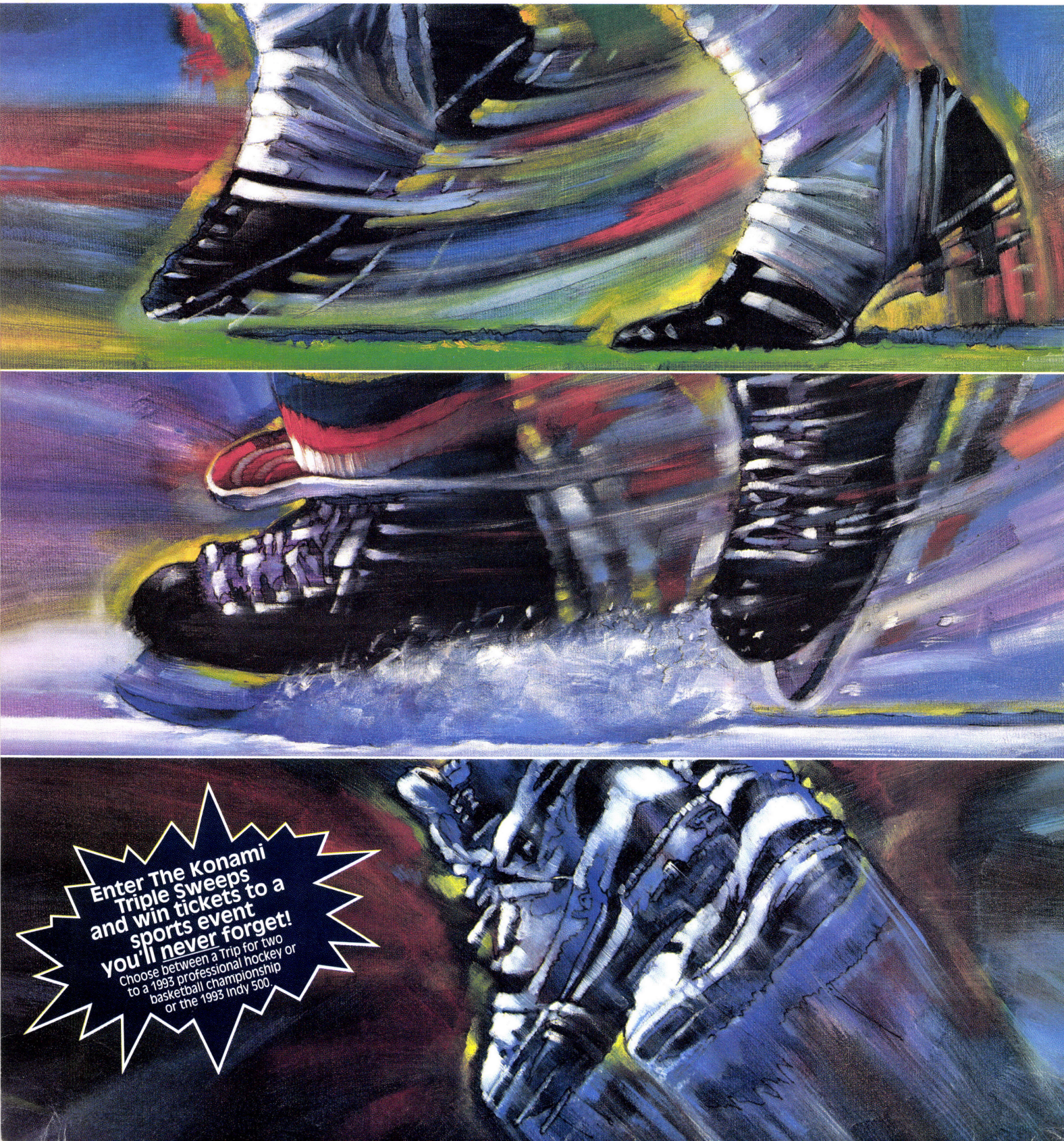
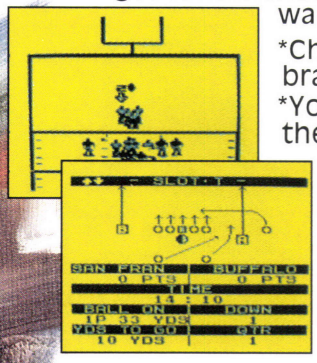
# PUT YOURSELF IN THEIR SHOES.



## IT'S CRUNCH TIME

Lace up the cleats and pull down the helmet. You're about to get sandwiched by the most realistic assemblage of gridiron warriors this side of the Super Bowl.

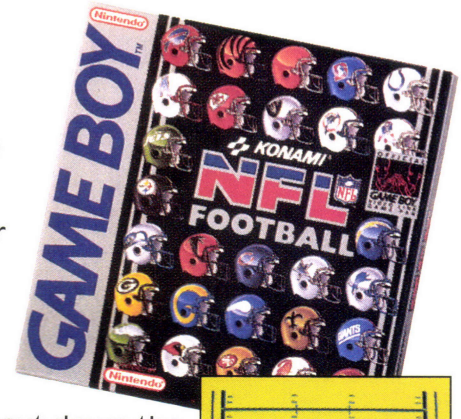


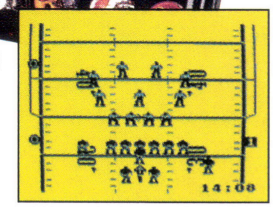

*Choose from 28 franchises in this 11 vs. 11 player brawlfest.

*You're in complete control when gunning for the goal posts. Use bootlegs, laterals, post patterns, and bombs to blow you over the adversary and into the end zone.

*Gut check football at its nastiest when you're on defense. Blitz, pick off passes, and cut down the quarterback.

*Use Game Link™ to take on a friend or play a competition crushing computer.




## BUCKLE ON YOUR BLADES

You're about to skate into a whole new arena. The NES™ classic, Blades of Steel®, has just made a power play into your Game Boy®.

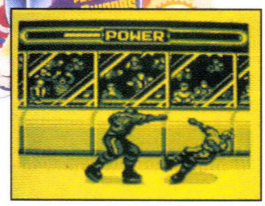
*Choose between eight of the nation's hottest teams: Chicago, Los Angeles, Vancouver, Montreal, New York, Edmonton, Minnesota and Toronto.

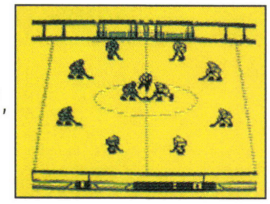
*Face off on either Junior, College or Pro levels.

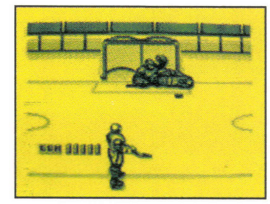
*Hone your fighting, slap shooting, and goal tending skills in the practice mode.

*Penalty shots and sudden death overtimes are common in your quest for the cup.

*Win a trip and tickets to a Pro-Hockey championship playoff game.

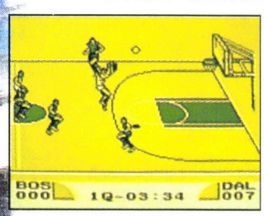


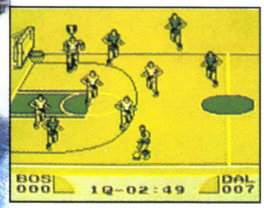





## PUMP UP THE HIGH-TECH HI TOPS.

Get ready for high flying, profiling pro hoops! All the rim rockin' action of this NES™ classic is stuffed into an intense 5 on 5 test of Game Boy hang time.




*Watch the cameras zoom in when you go airborne to dunk.

*On offense you can pass, free throw, jump shoot, and drive the lane against eight tenacious teams, each with different strengths and weaknesses.

*If you hope to hold your own on defense you must master rebounding, and stealing.

*Play against the computer, or use the Game Link to force feed the ball to a friend.

*Choose from three challenging levels of difficulty.

*Win a trip and tickets to a Pro-Basketball championship playoff game.

Available December 1991.

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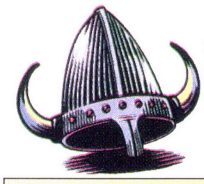
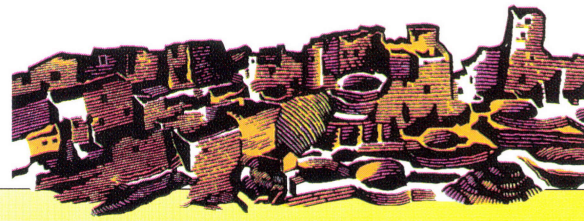
# THE FIRST GAME THAT TAKES 1500 YEARS TO SOLVE.



Somewhere there's a bull without horns.



Keeps underarm deodorant companies in business.

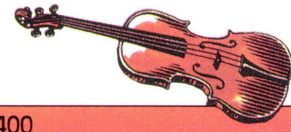
400 500 700

You'd be unhappy too if you'd been sitting indian style this long.

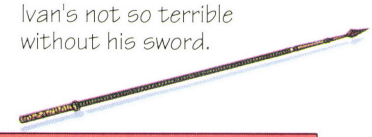
さむらい

800 900 1100

Carmen Sandiego goes cruising.



Ivan's not so terrible without his sword.



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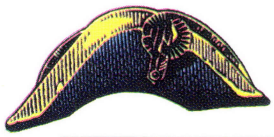
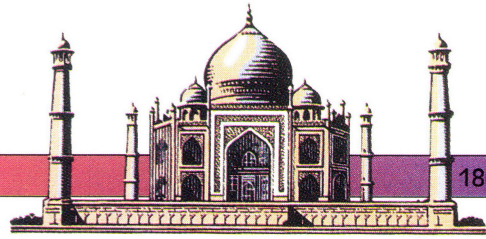
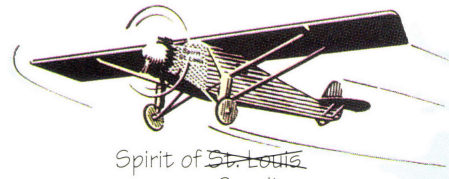
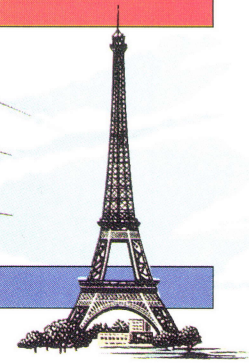






Spirit of ~~St. Louis~~ Sandiego



1600 1800 1900

But that may not be enough time to rescue history's priceless treasures from the grasp of the infamous Carmen Sandiego and her fifteen conniving cohorts. V.I.L.E. henchmen who trek through time pillaging for profit.

As Acme's renowned Detective, you've been entrusted with the Chronoskimmer 325i. A potent time mechanism that transports you over fifteen centuries through 80 missions and 48 locations. Interrogate witnesses, meet secretly with informants and scan areas for valuable clues that might break the biggest cases of all time wide open.

But your detecting days are numbered 'cause you only have a limited number of hours before the Chronoskimmer loses power, hurling you back to headquarters. So use your New American Desk Encyclopedia to quickly decipher leads to please a demanding Chief who despises failure.

Fortunately, you'll also have a Capture Robot in your arsenal to hunt down history's time bandits.

So pack your bags and report to headquarters. You're about to learn how to follow in the footsteps of history's greatest criminal.

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Now Available for the NES™

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CIRCLE #101 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Cover: Bullet-Proof Software's *FaceBall 2000*, developed by Xanth F/X for the Game Boy, brings multiplayer games to a new level. Turn to page 82 for a preview of this new, exciting game.

Cover Art: Digital Art

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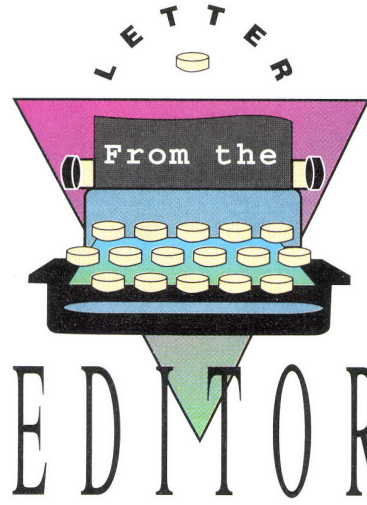
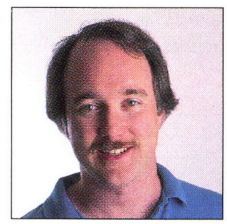



Time certainly isn't consistent. Though you are likely reading this November issue in October, I'm writing this in August. Such is the time warp that I call my editorial.

The reason I bring this up is that our magazine, like the rest of the country, has just had the Super Nintendo Entertainment System or SNES—though some are billing it as the "Sneeze"—made available to it. Much as we expected, the SNES isn't much different than the Super Famicom that we previewed in earlier issues, and much of the software we are seeing now are direct ports of the Japanese games with minor alterations, such as language translations. Surprisingly, Nintendo didn't even change the passwords for *Pilotwings*.



Even more surprising is the fact that the SF and SNES carts are, for the most part, compatible (with the exception of some minor cosmetic alterations in the cartridge housings, similar to the differences between the Mega Drive and Genesis). Of course, we are already seeing files on Delphi and CompuServe detailing how to "modify" either machine to accept the other version's carts, as well as talk about a lock-out chip (as in the NES) in later versions of the SNES. Only time will tell if the lock-out chip comes to be, but you can bet that people are working on SF-to-SNES adapters as quickly as they possibly can.

Another thing we are seeing is a repeat of the "hardware wars" that heavily divided gamers recently. Just when it seems to be dying down and people realize that the Genesis and TurboGrafx-16 are both decent consoles, the SNES has come out prompting *more* furor over which machine is better.

We mess around with all of the machines that are available, and we can't come up with any definitive statements when people ask, "What is the best system I can buy?" The Neo•Geo has lots of graphic and sound muscle, but it's expensive. The Genesis and TG-16 both have been around for a while as "next generation" responses to the success of the NES and offer large libraries of games. The NES is a hard machine to ignore for its giant library and durability. And the SNES, though new to the scene, has lots of games coming and offers a lot of bang for its $200 price tag. As we've noted before, software is an important consideration when you buy. No matter how powerful the machine is, if the software is poor, the hardware will be a disappointment. The old saying is, "A chain is only as strong as its weakest link."

The important point, though, is to enjoy the games. If you spend your time looking over your shoulder at what others have, you won't enjoy what *you* have.

**—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor**

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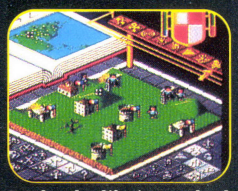
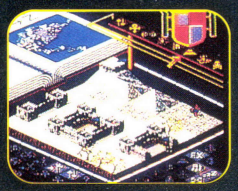
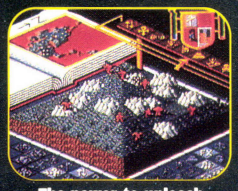


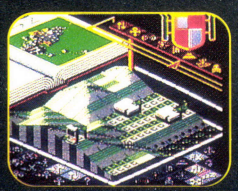
Level and cultivate your land for civilization to flourish.



There is strength in numbers ...as your population grows, so does your supreme authority.



The power to unleash volcanoes, earthquakes and floods, all for the sake of goodness, is yours.



Adapt your strategies to meet the challenges of 10 formidable terrains and over 900 worlds.

You are a Supreme Being. The fate of the population of over 900 worlds is in your hands. Your loyal followers depend on you for fertile land and protection from the spreading forces of evil. To defeat them, unleash your power to command the forces of nature-volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, floods and more.

Gather your forces and prepare for the ultimate war to end all evil. This is no mortal task. But fear not... you are no mere mortal!

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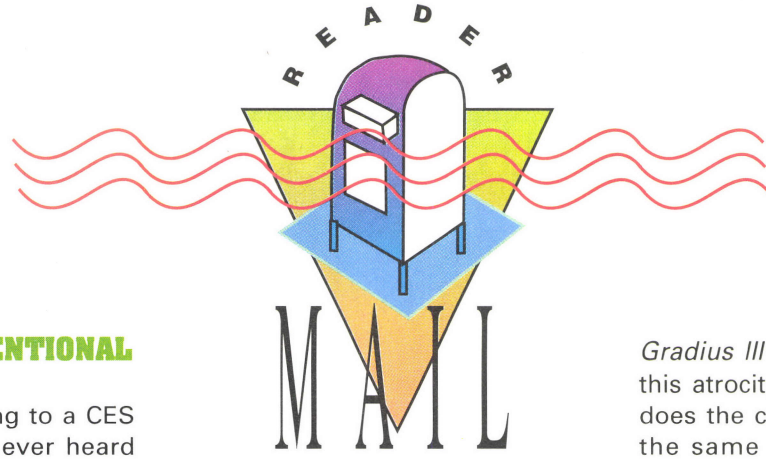



## WANTS TO BE CONVENTIONAL

Dear VG&CE:

I am interested in going to a CES convention, but I have never heard anything about when and where they are or how you get in. I am curious whether it is open to the public and how you get tickets or an invitation.

—David Sepanski
Farmington Hills, Michigan

*The CES—held in Chicago in the summer and in Las Vegas in the winter—is not open to the public, nor is it open to those under 18. You don't get invited, but you have to be a member of the "business" or with the press to be allowed in, and identification must be shown.*

## MEGA-QUESTIONS

Dear VG&CE:

I have been a loyal subscriber for almost two years. I own a Sega Genesis, a Macintosh and an NES. And I think the Genesis is one of the best video-game systems around.

I have seen screen shots of some Mega Drive games and have noticed they are in Japanese. Is this true of all Mega Drive games?

Could it be possible for Konami to team up with the Genesis and get some awesome arcade games (*The Simpsons, TMNT*)?

Your mag is the best around! Keep it up!

—John T. Stenson
Prior Lake, Minnesota

*The Mega Drive is the Japanese counterpart to the American Genesis, so most games would include Japanese language. Some are in English, because many Japanese gamers understand the language.*

*As far as Konami doing Genesis games goes, we contacted a Konami spokesperson who said the company has received a lot of calls from people asking the same thing. Unfortunately, Konami isn't planning on doing cartridges for the Genesis.*

## NEW HARDWARE WARS

Dear VG&CE:

I would like to talk to you about a serious question I have had on my mind for a countless number of months. I know that Nintendo and Sega are trying to duke it out in the video-gaming industry, and to my personal feelings, I like the 16-bit Genesis a lot better. The Genesis has its own glory to hold on to, but I can't stand the way you people salivate over the Super Famicom/Super NES. I feel you greatly exaggerate its performance. Does this world really need another 16-bit on the market?

You say that the SNES can manipulate sounds unheard of on other systems. How can I believe that when you say that it only has eight channels of stereo sound with voice sampling? The Genesis easily overpowers that with a whomping ten-channel stereo sound and voice sampling. You say the SNES can produce CD-quality sound. In my personal opinion, I feel the Genesis lives up to that standard easily. Why did you greatly overrate this system (along with others)? After all, what is the sense of having all those big graphics when you don't have the megahertz to move them faster? *Gradius III* was a perfect example of this atrocity. The Genesis easily outdoes the competition running about the same speed as the incredible Neo•Geo (68000). The SNES runs just a little faster than the 8-bit NES but not fast enough for Sega's 16-bit.

So to win my respect, along with thousands of countless others, try not to overdo it with system or system-game reviews.

—Carl Rizzo, Jr.
Bergenfield, New Jersey

Dear VG&CE:

Let me preface this first by saying that I really do enjoy your magazine. I think that it is finely produced and very entertaining. My only complaint is that you are always trashing Nintendo. You also seem to think that the Genesis is somehow the best gaming machine. I totally disagree. I bought the Genesis and ten games and was not very impressed. Sure they look and sound great, but I'm not a very fickle gamer and look for a little more than a visceral game. The games are boring and extremely easy. I know that I'm a good player, but I'm not that good! I also couldn't believe that you praised the Genesis controller. The buttons are lousy and [Sega] only includes one—and with a two-player game! The people at Sega must be idiots.

Another complaint has been the Super NES. I wrote the Game Doctor a while back and said that the Super Famicom would destroy the Genesis and TG-16. Of course, the good Doc didn't believe me. It appears that my

**Letters to be considered for publication should be addressed to *Reader Mail*, VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters may be edited for style, clarity and space considerations. We regret that we cannot respond to all mail received.**

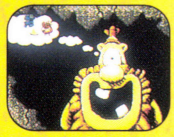
CHANGE THE COURSE OF EVOLUTION...

# PLAY TROG!™

That crazy, one-eyed caveman, Trog, is hungry...and dinos Spike and Bloop know what that means: *RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!*

Don't be the main course in Trog's Stone Age feast!

Change the course of evolution: don't become Trog's Stone Age Feast! Instead, race through 50 fun-filled islands, witnessing the greatest inventions of all time: fire, the wheel, the pogo stick (the pogo stick?)—all invented by Trog to catch his dinner—you!



Trog discovers fire and the Bar-B-Que... all in one day!

Munch on a pineapple and become a Trog-stompin' T-Rex!

Save the Dinos...or you're extinct!

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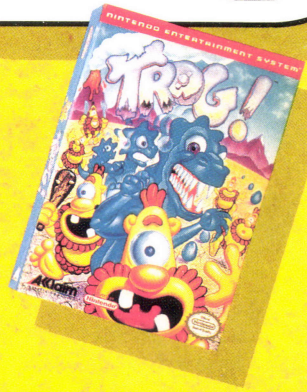


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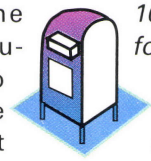
CIRCLE #127 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

prediction has come true. While you guys seem to not like the Super NES, one of your colleagues seems to be enamored with the system. I'm speaking, of course, of Revo Emag, who seems to be the only voice of reason now that Brother Fulk has converted. Whoever Revo Emag is, I hope that he/she will continue to contribute to your mag.

In conclusion, I hope that you will not be so biased in the future. Sure, Nintendo executives are sleazy, but they also brought video games from the brink of disaster, and for that we *all* owe them thanks.



—Brent Webb-Hicks
Baltimore, Maryland

*Well, guys, you make some good points, but yet again we're caught in the middle of a hardware war. It was bound to happen.*

*Here's our take on the situation: Whenever a new machine comes to the market, there is competition between the loyal factions to prove that their machine is better and more worthy of attention. The fact is, no machine has to "destroy" any others anymore than one single car or television has to be the only one people buy—there's plenty of room for a* variety *of machines to survive in the marketplace. Granted, the NES is the king, with about one-third of U.S. households owning one, but there is more competition now in the "next generation" market, with the Genesis, TurboGrafx-16, Neo•Geo and SNES all vying for the sale. All of these machines are great in their own right and feature hot-and-cold running software, but the decision should lie with each particular gamer. It's personal preference.*

*Before you buy, sample each console to see what you like and don't like. Ask around the local arcade for other opinions. Also, don't just go by spec sheets, because there may be other factors that play a part. For instance, the Genesis and Neo•Geo both use a 68000 processor, but the Neo•Geo has other support chips to allow it to exceed the Genesis in some ways (in addition to boosting its price). It's not competition, it's playing games.*

*Finally, we don't think we play favorites, and, obviously, since you guys can't decide which system we are favoring, it can't be too much of a factor. Again, thanks for your letters and comments.*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CIRCLE #105 ON READER SERVICE CARD.


## WE'RE NOT IMMORTAL

Dear VG&CE:

In your August 1991 issue, there was an error in one of the codes of the *Easter Egg Hunt*. On page 34, the code for Level 6 of *The Immortal* doesn't work. I don't know what the code really is, but I'd like it very much if you could ask the people that gave it to you, and write it again in your next issue.

—Sebastien Maltais
Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec, Canada

*Sorry for the slip-up, Sebastien. If you turn to our* Tip Sheet *section on page 18, there is another letter regarding* The Immortal, *as well as the tip you are looking for. We try to be as accurate as possible, but we don't catch every mistake.*

## MAKING THE RIGHT LYNX

Dear VG&CE:

First of all, I would like to compliment you on the good information you give. I only have two copies of your magazine (June and July 1991), but that's enough to see what good information you shell out.

In a catalog from Electronics Boutique, I saw an advertisement for an Atari Lynx for $99.99! I know your July issue had an ad for two separate versions of the Lynx, but the one that is supposed to be $149.99 is the one in the E. B. ad. What's the deal? Who's right and who's wrong, or are you both right?

—Jeffrey M. Wilson
Taylors, South Carolina

*In a way, we're both right. The Lynx in most ads is the "older" and larger original. The new Lynx not only is smaller, but has a new price of $99.95; this model doesn't include any extras. There is a $149.95 "bundle" that has the Lynx,* California Games, *an AC adapter and the ComLynx cable. Hope that answers your question.*

## CORRECTION

• The only way we can get the latest information to you is by reviewing software in prerelease form, however, it occasionally gets us in trouble. One such case was the review of Artworx's *Strip Poker Three* (VG&CE, September 1991). Bill Kunkel noted in his review that "...hitting the space bar at a time during the game gives *Strip Poker Three* the silicon equivalent of a nervous breakdown."

We've since discovered that the blanking of the screen is a feature of the game called a "Modesty Mode." This was inserted "for those times when you feel it is necessary to temporarily extinguish the screen display." Apparently, the space bar is a toggle for this mode, and it is documented in the game's instructions. The documentation wasn't available at the time of review, so the modesty feature was overlooked.

• Also, the October 1991 cover was one of the best we've ever had, but we neglected to credit Dennis Carmichael as the artist. Sorry, Dennis.

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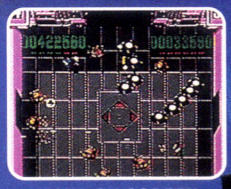
Congratulations! You're the next lucky contestant on the game show with the ultimate in prizes...YOUR LIFE! Sorry, no mindless blondes spinning wheels here. Just deadly action, flying shrapnel, and total carnage—all in front of a live studio audience! Instead of picking vowels, you pick 6 futuristic weapons like triple photon lasers and lethal plasma grenades. And the 2 controller action gives you 360° arcade firepower.

Sure, you can win toasters and microwaves...after you defeat hordes of cyborg mutants, power orbs and the 30-ton Mutoid Man! Any wonder this show's #1 in the ratings?

"EAT MY SHRAPNEL!" IN OVER 45 ENEMY-FILLED STUDIO BATTLEGROUNDS!



MORE ON SCREEN ENEMIES THAN ANY OTHER NES GAME!

DON'T LOSE YOUR HEAD MUTOID MAN...TOO LATE!

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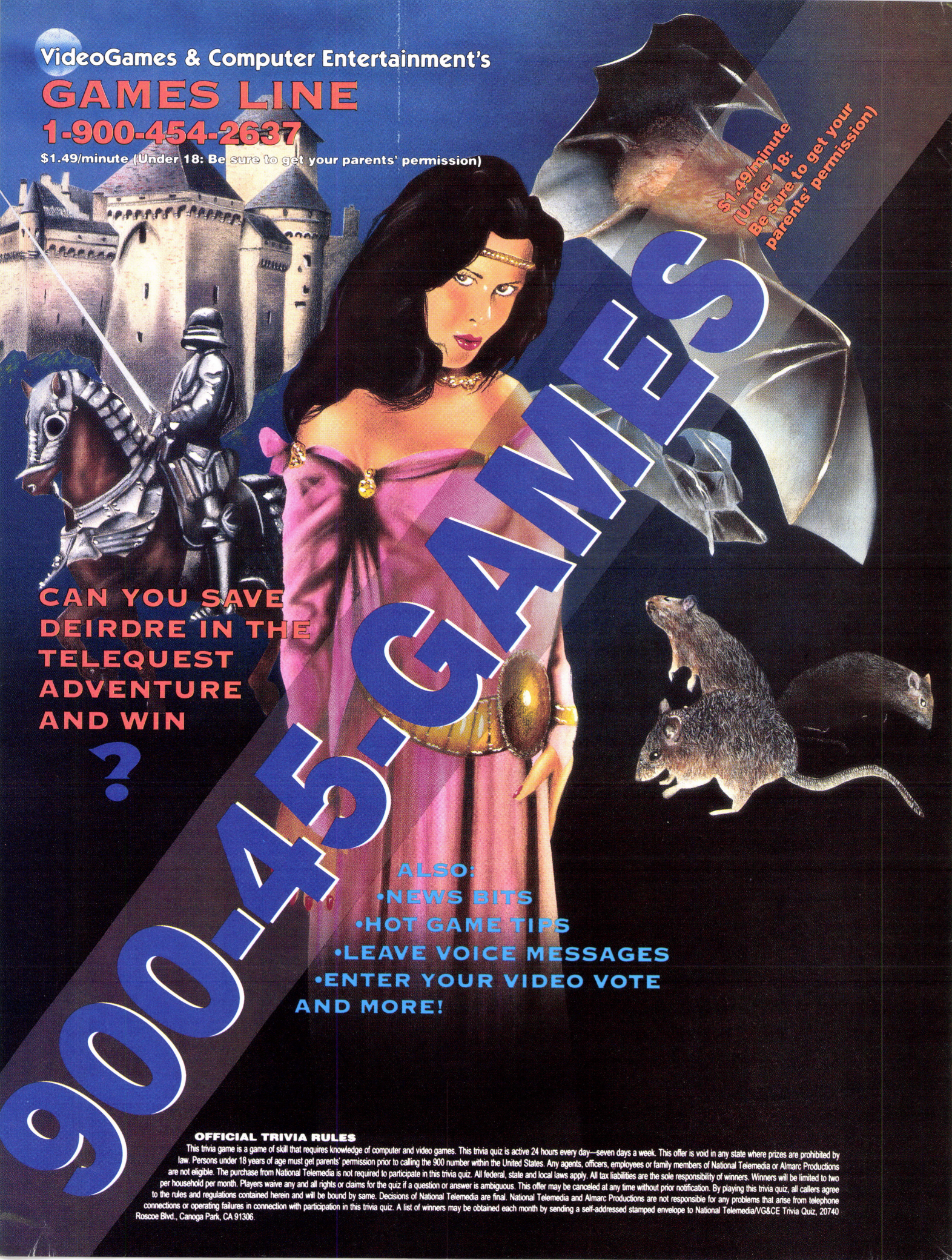


**OFFICIAL TRIVIA RULES**

This trivia game is a game of skill that requires knowledge of computer and video games. This trivia quiz is active 24 hours every day—seven days a week. This offer is void in any state where prizes are prohibited by law. Persons under 18 years of age must get parents' permission prior to calling the 900 number within the United States. Any agents, officers, employees or family members of National Telemedia or Almarc Productions are not eligible. The purchase from National Telemedia is not required to participate in this trivia quiz. All federal, state and local laws apply. All tax liabilities are the sole responsibility of winners. Winners will be limited to two per household per month. Players waive any and all rights or claims for the quiz if a question or answer is ambiguous. This offer may be canceled at any time without prior notification. By playing this trivia quiz, all callers agree to the rules and regulations contained herein and will be bound by same. Decisions of National Telemedia are final. National Telemedia and Almarc Productions are not responsible for any problems that arise from telephone connections or operating failures in connection with participation in this trivia quiz. A list of winners may be obtained each month by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to National Telemedia/VG&CE Trivia Quiz, 20740 Roscoe Blvd., Canoga Park, CA 91306.

# NEW

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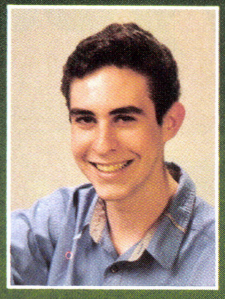

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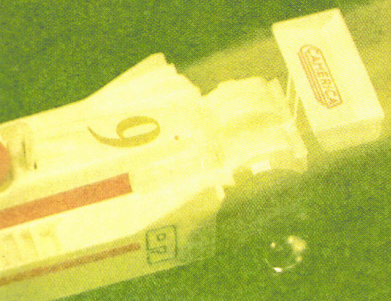

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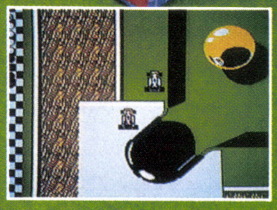

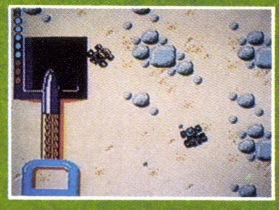

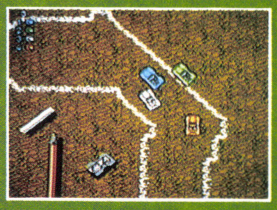

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*BIGNOSE™– A prehistoric hunting and adventure game.*

CIRCLE #106 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Welcome to DecapAttack,™ the new game for Sega™ Genesis™ starring Chuck D. Head, who demolishes his enemies with just a toss of his head.

Chuck is trying to reunite the seven parts of Eyeland that were blown apart by the mad and ruthless Dr. Frank N. Stein. But first, he and his head will have to come face to face with some of the doctor's most fiendish creations—creatures like Chuck Roast, Biojaw and Snojoe.

Chuck can lose a ghoul by leaping across a collapsing log bridge. Hop aboard a roving eye to escape vicious werewolves. Bounce over horned beasts with a flagpole. And gain extra propulsion by punching a skull head.

In a jam, he can always use his other head. The one in his chest that lunges out to chomp anything in its path, instantly turning attacking totem poles into piles of toothpicks.

Everyone knows that two heads are better than one. But in this game, you've got three heads—counting your own, of course. That's enough to give the demented Doctor more than a few headaches himself.

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# To win at this game, you'

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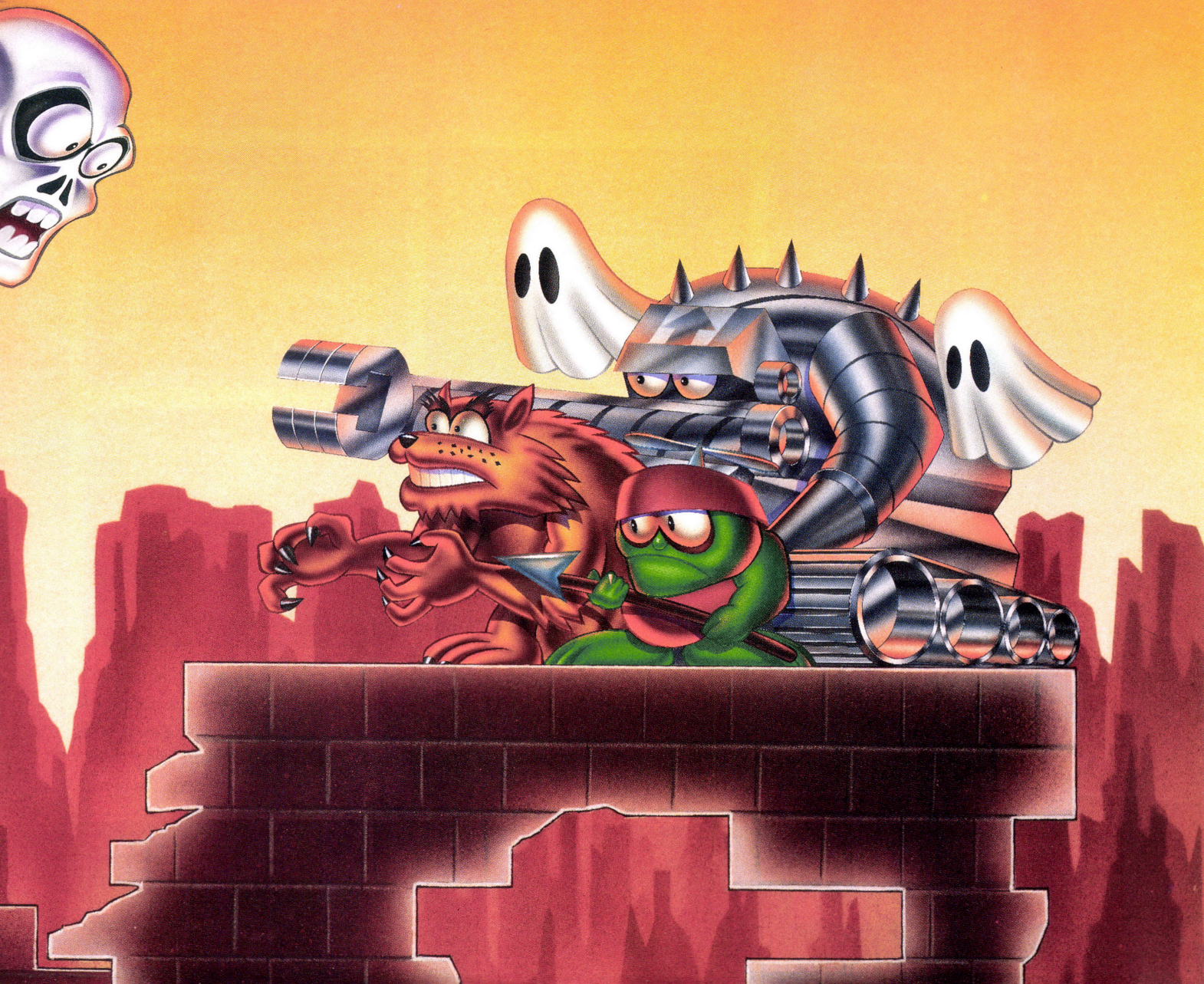
CIRCLE #108 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

DecapAttack

# ve got to use your head.



Even the best player has trouble with a game now and again, but where can you turn for help? VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT has designed ***Tip Sheet*** to give you, the reader, answers to questions such as, "How do I defeat the end boss on this level?" or, "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find the blue vase." So if you're having a problem on a game, write to us, and our group of experts will do everything they can to solve it. Send your letters to

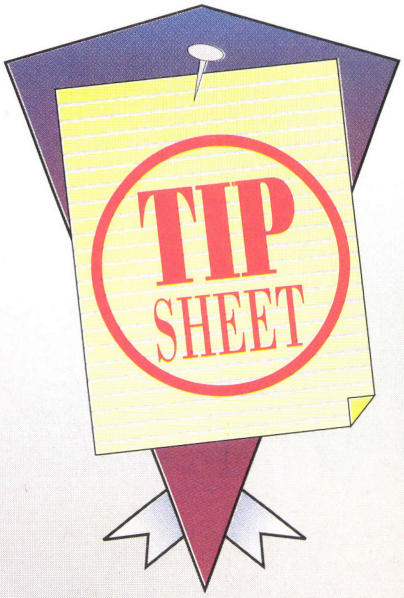
**VG&CE,**

**9171 Wilshire Blvd.,**

**Suite 300**

**Beverly Hills, CA 90210**

**Attn: *Tip Sheet***

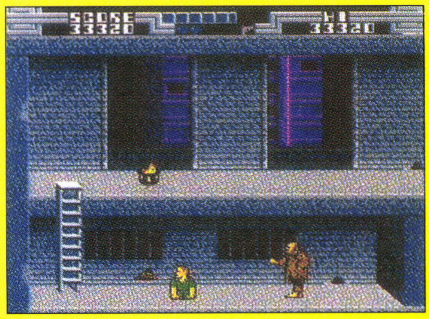


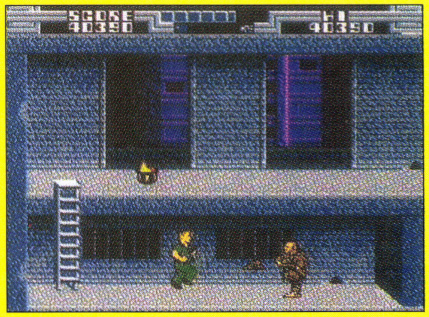

## by Donn Nauert

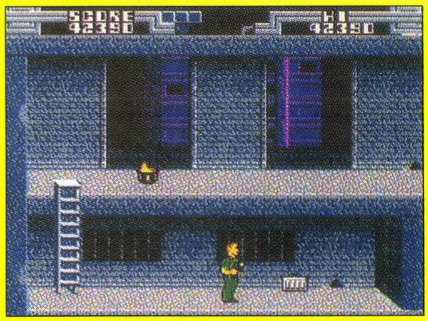
I recently purchased the game *Alex Kidd: High Tech World* for my Sega Master System. I can't get all eight pieces of the map! I found the one in the parents' room, the library, the servants' room, Tom and Mark's room, the one James burnt (I restored it), the one in the garbage can and the one in Mary's room. I can't get the eighth. If you please help me or just give me a password, I would really appreciate it!

— Tom Hill
Glenbeulah, Wisconsin

*The final piece of the map is located on the third level. Find the clock and, using the ladder to reach it, change the time on the clock.*







For Christmas I got the NES *Total Recall* game. I have gotten to the level (fifth) of the cement factory where the guy throws his hat at you. I've tried shooting him with a gun and hitting him with my fists, but nothing seems to work. He kills me every time. Any tips would be greatly appreciated.

— Anthony Williams
American Canyon, California

*When you beat the boss of the cement factory (to get back the suitcase), you need to duck to avoid the hat as it flies over you, then (while you're still pressing down) jump over the hat as it returns. When you start coming down from the jump, shoot his head. This is a tricky combination, but it can be done.*

As the Prince of Thieves you'll:

- Explore the treacherous Sherwood Forest when you travel back in time to strange and eerie Medieval Britain.
- Engage in arcade-style combat, duelling and chase scenes on horseback in four distinct action levels.
- Battle evil rivals like the Sheriff of Nottingham and his men to increase your strength levels.
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CIRCLE #109 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

I received the NES games *Puzznic* and *Gravnic* as a gift. Taito America Corp. put out the games, but when I sent for the tips (which it said it would provide), I was informed it no longer existed.

There are two levels I am stuck on. In *Puzznic*, Level 12-6 with a password Z5JC, and in *Gravnic*, Level 8-2 using the password WRZ5. Any help would be appreciated.

—Terry Calabrese
Bronxville, New York

I am a thirty-year-old woman hooked on the NES. I have recently been exposed to a game called *Puzznic*, and I think it's super! One problem though, I'm stuck in Level 12-6. Can anybody help me out? A solution or code to 12-7 would be greatly appreciated.

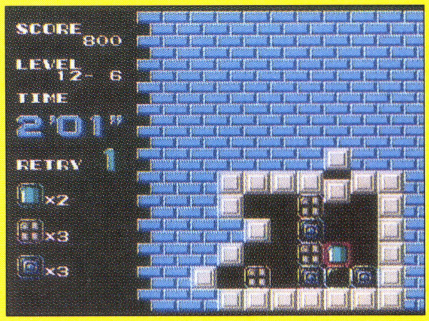
— Cynthia Foss
Chino, California

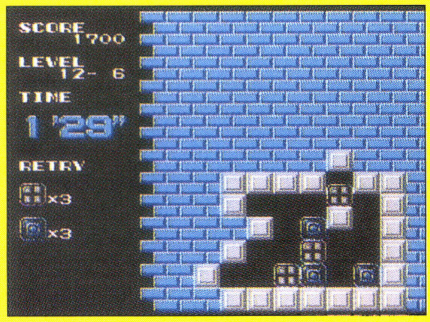
*Level 12-6 for* Puzznic *requires quick reflexes. First, move the bottom left gray block one space to the left, Then take out the two green blocks on the right. Now comes the tricky part: You must move the top gray block onto the moving platform on its way up. Make sure it doesn't cancel out the other one in that row.*

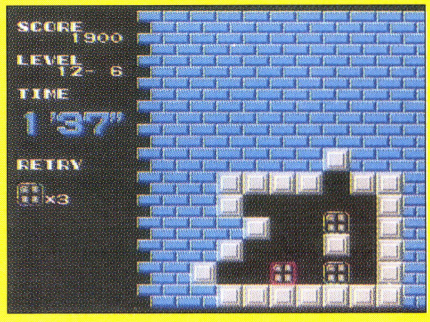
*As it reaches the top, you must move the blue block over to the right so that it will cancel out the other two. You should now be left with the three gray blocks.*

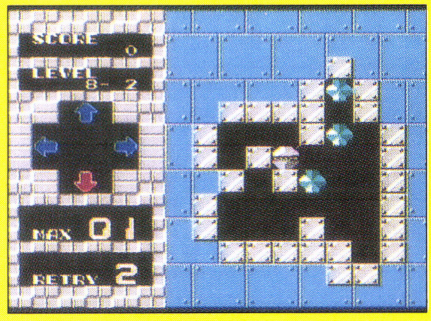
*Starting with the gray block on the left (the one that's not on the platform), move both one space to the right. Now let the block on the platform fall between the two. If you have any problems doing this, the code for Level 12-7 is ZFC7.*

*Finally, to solve Level 8-2 in* Gravnic, *press D, L, U, R, D, R, U, L, D.*




I have the game *The Immortal*, and I can't get by the worm room. I recently bought the August 1991 edition of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT magazine, because it had the codes for Levels 2-7 of *The Immortal* in it (page 34).

The code for Level 6, "650V61-0005Y0," was wrong. There must be a letter or number missing because it didn't work, and the code for Level 4 had too many *T*s in it. Level 5 is the only place I'm having trouble with so far. The worm room is very hard. That's why I wanted the code for Level 6. It's boring trying to get through Levels 3-5.

— Scorey
Rochester, New York

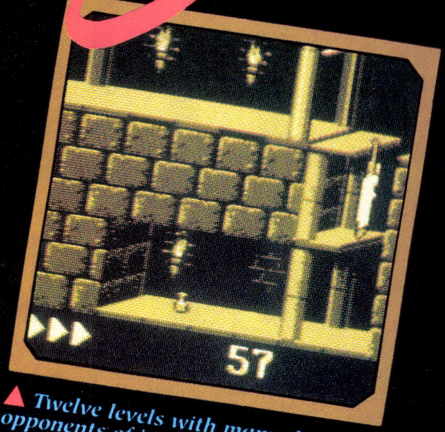
*Sorry about the typos, Scorey, but I don't really know what happened. Try these new codes instead: For Level 4, enter XS9V131001X6, and for Level 6, try 6590Y63000SY0. That should help you out.*

# SHARPEN Your Skills

Can you hack it? As the imprisoned young adventurer who has just managed to escape your cell in the palace dungeons, you have only 60 minutes to make your way to the top of the palace and rescue the beautiful princess from a forced marriage with Jaffar the evil tyrant who has stolen her father's throne.

PRINCE OF PERSIA™ will plunge you into an exotic world of challenging puzzles and non-stop action, featuring the most fluid and realistic animation you've ever seen on your Game Boy®!

You may be swift and cunning enough to slash your way past palace guards and dodge trap doors... but how will you withstand the wicked sorcery of Jaffar?




▲ Twelve levels with many different opponents of increasing difficulty.

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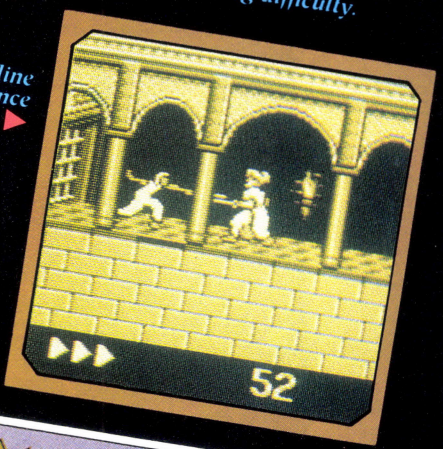

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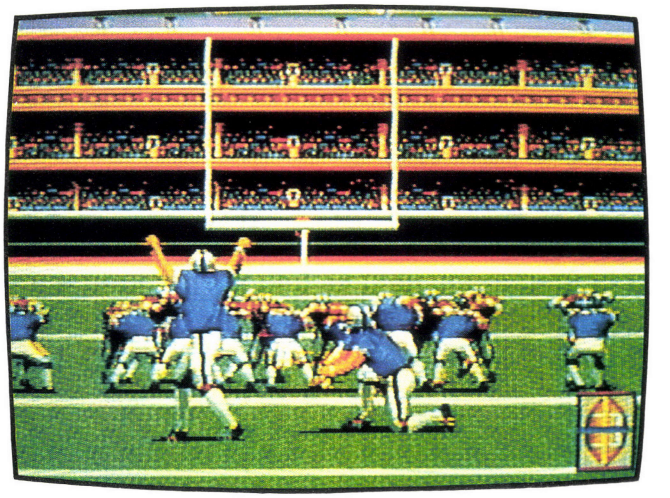
Look for upcoming sports games from TurboGrafx-16: Davis Cup Tennis, Andre Panza Kick Boxing, TV Sports Baseball and Champions Forever Boxing.



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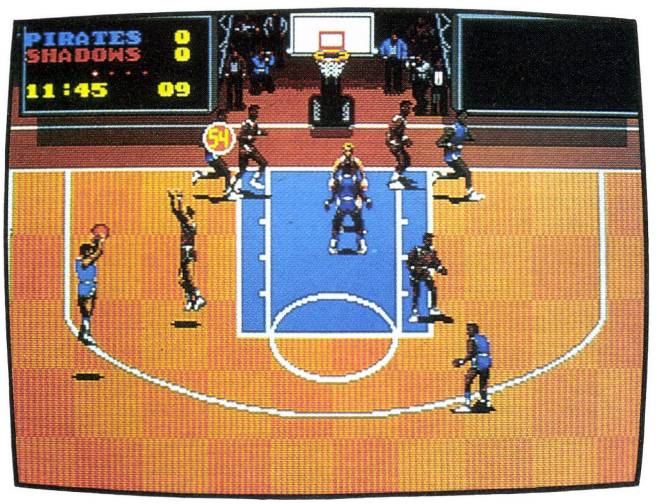


A victory on this one will make you feel ten feet tall, even if you're only 5'2".

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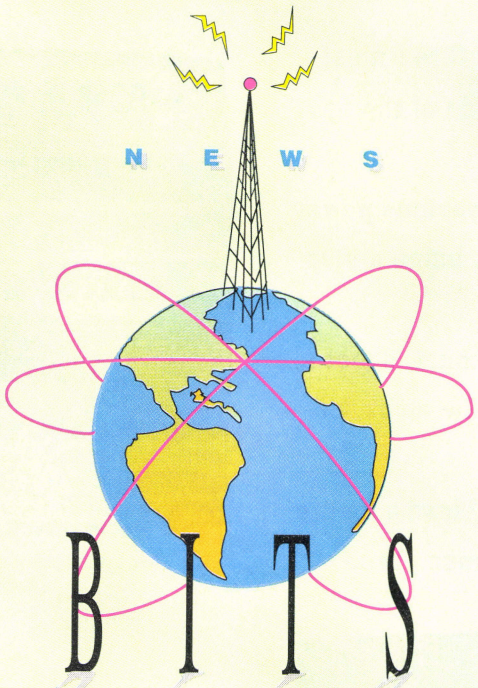
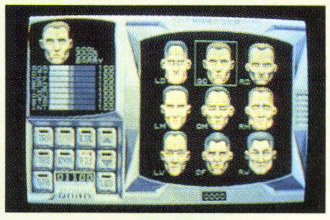
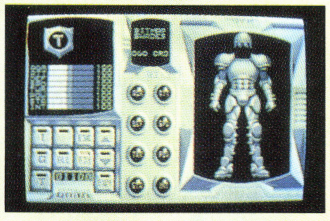
JOYCE WORLEY




## Media Magnate in Video-Game Arena

The Maxwell Entertainment group, owned by Robert Maxwell, announced the creation of a new company that will herald its entry into the video-game market. Arena Entertainment will join Maxwell's





other holdings (Macmillan Publishing, *The New York Daily News*, the Mirror Group of newspapers, plus holdings in MTV, cable and satellite TV networks).

Arena plans three products in 1991: *Back to the Future III*, *Speedball 2* and *Battlemaster*, all for play on the Sega Genesis game system. Development is currently under way for a first-quarter 1992 release of *Predator 2* and *Aliens 3*.

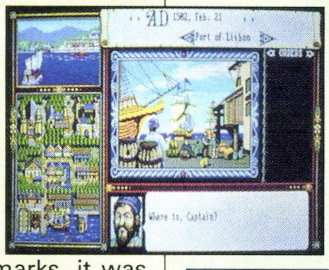
The new company, created to publish software-cartridge products for the U.S. video-game market, is headed by Geoffrey Mulligan, a former officer of Activision/Mediagenic. Mulligan explained that the development of 16-bit technology offers tremendous opportunities because of "consumer demand for newer, more technologically advanced games." He went on to say, "As video-game machines get more powerful, the lines separating traditional entertainment media will be gradually erased by multimedia entertainment. Eventually video games will use evolving technologies like CD-ROM to merge video, digitized speech and music and computer-generated graphics like those you see in today's blockbuster movies."

## Sega Sues RazorSoft

Sega filed suit against RazorSoft International of Oklahoma City and Punk Development of Sunnyvale, California, alleging that the companies made unauthorized use of Sega's trademarks, copyrights, logos and trade secrets. Sega further claims that RazorSoft breached their contractual agreements and engaged in conspiracy and fraud. The products in question were created by Punk Development.

In June 1991 Sega terminated the agreement that made RazorSoft a third-party software licensee. Now Sega alleges that RazorSoft is marketing products that use proprietary information and make unauthorized use of the Sega logo.

The general counsel for Sega, Kiichi Nishikura, explained, "In order to protect the strong brand identification and equity that we have developed in the Sega and Sega Genesis trademarks, it was necessary to bring this action."

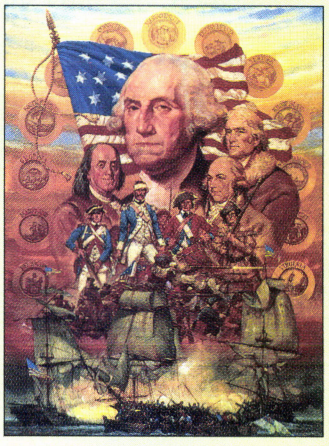


In an exclusive VIDEO-GAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT interview RazorSoft's spokesman, Mike Brazier, explained that Sega is currently holding $250,000, which represents the costs of their June and July shipments. RazorSoft, after protracted negotiations, had brought an earlier "sealed" lawsuit against Sega. The countersuit by Sega is what made this public knowledge. "The content of the games is the issue," says Brazier.

The games that RazorSoft and Sega are believed to have had difficulty with are *TechnoCop* and *StormLord*. RazorSoft denies any technological infringement.

## KOEI to Introduce RPG

KOEI Corporation, best known for its line of historical simulations, is sailing up a new creek in *Uncharted Waters*. The story, set in the 16th century, when Spain and Portugal ruled the seas, casts the gamer as a captain/explorer—trading, pirating, gambling and achieving fortune, fame and the hand of a princess



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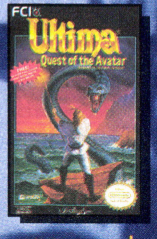


Ultima Quest of the Avatar

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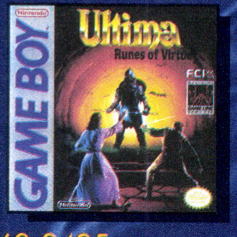
Ultima Exodus




Ultima Runes of Virtue

For hints on Nintendo games, call FCI's hotline – (708) 968-0425

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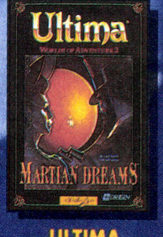
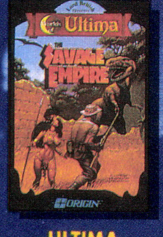


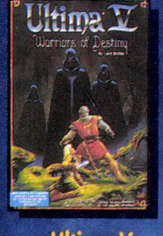

ULTIMA Martian Dreams



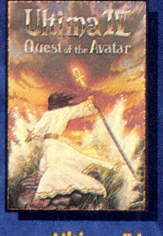

ULTIMA Savage Empire

Ultima VII The Black Gate

Ultima VI The False Prophet




Ultima V Warriors of Destiny




Ultima IV Way of the Avatar

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in marriage. KOEI expects to have the game up and sailing before the holiday buying season for play on NES and IBM PC-compatible computers.

Other new titles out this autumn are *Romance of the Three Kingdoms II* (features six new scenarios, up to 12 players, 400 characters, Ad Lib sound support, plus more advanced diplomacy and strategy than the first *Romance*); *L'Empereur* (Napoleonic strategy contest); and *Liberty or Death* (relive the American Revolution, land and sea, from either side).

## EA Starts Hint Line

Electronic Arts has a new customer service line for frustrated gamers. The new 900 service [(900) 288-HINT] provides hints and passwords on the most popular EA games. The caller must use a touch-tone phone, then enter the system and key into the specific game through a series of push-button commands. It costs 95 cents for the first minute and 75 cents for each additional minute.

Currently the line includes hints for *The Immortal, James Pond, Might and Magic: Gates to Another World*, plus passwords on *Lakers vs. Celtics and the NBA Playoffs, John Madden Football, Sword of Sodan, Populous, Centurion, Defender of Rome, Faery Tale Adventure* and *King's Bounty.* The list will be updated and expanded over time.

## Developer Donates Game

Incredible Technologies, Inc., donated a *Peggle* game to the Give Kids the World Foundation. That's the group that gifts terminally ill children and their families with free trips to Orlando, Florida, and Walt Disney World. The *Peggle* is to be set up in a free-play game room, housed in a refurbished train caboose, in the Holiday Inn Kids Village. The game room is a popular play place for kids during their visits in Florida. It is stocked at all times with a music jukebox and at least six games.

*Peggle*, developed by Incredible Technologies, is manufactured and sold by Strata Group, Inc., as a coin-operated game kit. Other I.T. designs currently in the arcades are *Golden Tee Golf, Strata Bowling, Hot Shots Tennis* and *Arlington Horse Racing.* The company also designed and developed *BattleTech*, the six-player head-to-head space game in Chicago's *BattleTech Center.*

## New Lynx on the Prowl

Atari has started shipping a new version of the Lynx, the company's hit handheld video-game system. Totally compatible with earlier models, the new Lynx is smaller, more lightweight and boasts a couple of extra features. Now the player can turn off the backlight (to extend battery life), and the new playscreen is recessed, protecting it from harm and providing a better viewing angle.

The new Lynx is currently available for the same price as the older model ($99.95 by itself) and is also packed in the $149.95 set (which includes an adapter, the *California Games* cart and a coupon good for a second Lynx cartridge).

In a separate announcement, Atari introduced upgraded Lynx documentation. The latest games now include a four-color sheet with graphics and instructions on one side and a collectible poster on the back.

## Paris to Host Game Show

Paris, France, is the site of the SuperGames Show '91, a trade fair for professionals and shopping spree for the public, which will be held December 6-9. European software professionals will demonstrate their products and give the pre-holiday crowd a chance to see and buy the latest new computer and video games. The event is sponsored by Micro News.

If you love Paris in the winter, or plan to be in France at that time, call (33) 1 48 91 04 51 for information about the time and place.

## Canada Gets TV Show

Canada's first video and electronic TV show, *Video & Arcade Top 10*, is currently airing on Youth Television Network (YTV). Each half-hour segment features two game playoffs, with head-to-head competition using five players chosen from the studio audience. The program also has reports on youth fashions, top-10 music videos, Canadian concert listings, top-10 arcade games, movie previews, news reports and viewer contests.

The on-air personality is Gordon Michael Woolvett, an experienced program jockey on YTV. Other screen participants are Liza Fromer, music editor and field reporter, Elissa Mills, fashion and field editor, and Joel Keller, who provides color commentary during the competitions, which feature both computer and video games.

## Hearing Is Seeing, With Pixound

Hologramophone Research, Inc., got together with Cilantro Computing Services, Inc., to release *Pixound*, a musical screen interpreter for Amiga and IBM PC computers. It uses MIDI sound synthesis to turn graphics into audio.

*Pixound* lets the user load any graphic (from paint program or scanner) or view any of the art on disk, then translates the hues of each pixel into chords. Using auto play, the program browses through the graphic, playing the music of the colors, or the computerist can scan (using a mouse) the picture. Colors can be changed to produce new sounds, and the 60 scales included vary the sounds to suit the situation.

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CLXAA

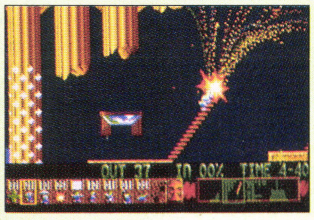
Of course, it has uses for serious musicians, as well. It's a MIDI controller and sequence recorder, with 20 preset harmonies for three voices and 60 scale modes. It bridges with most graphic and music programs and works with MIDI or internal voices.

*Pixound* retails for $79

Cilantro Computing
Service, Inc.
2277 W. Highway 36,
Suite 224
St. Paul, MN 55113
(612) 636-5777

### Lemmings Marches to CDTV and Other Formats

The *Lemmings* are on the move. Psygnosis' hit Amiga, Amstrad, Atari ST and IBM PC game is marching to the CDTV format. It's also scheduled for release on the Macintosh and has been licensed for most video-game systems. Inside sources also tell us that a coin-op is currently under construction.



The untiring marchers are raking in awards all over the world. Most recently *Lemmings* was tagged as the "Computer Game of the Year" in the European Computer Leisure Awards ceremony that took place at the Hippodrome in London.

### UBI Soft Enters Star Wars Agreement

UBI Soft made an agreement with Lucasfilm Games that gave the French manufacturer worldwide development and marketing rights for a *Star Wars* game for play on the Nintendo Game Boy. Game play in the new game will follow the film's plot. Christine Quemard, general manager of UBI Soft, expressed enthusiasm for the project, "Star Wars is the perfect theme. From fighting your way out of the Mos Eisley cantina to piloting the Millennium Falcon to attacking the Death Star, the movie is like one big video game."

The game will be available early in 1992. May the Force be with the programmers and designers.

In other UBI Soft news, the company announced shipment of three titles for winter 1991-92. *Battle Isle* (Amiga, IBM PC) is a strategy war game with land, sea and air forces. In addition to 32 levels, the game also provides maps for Europe and Iraq. *Light Quest* (Amiga, IBM PC) combines adventure and arcade action, as players choose their character for the multidirectional scrolling quest. *Starush* (IBM PC) requires the gamer to restore balance to the constellations. It features oversized graphics through 13 levels, ten intermediary screens and eight parallax levels, for one or two players.

### Sharp Games Added to Wizard

Sharp introduced a new line of game software cards for the Wizard. That's Sharp's handheld electronic organizer for execs. The games come on cards, each with a custom keyboard that is activated by the Wizard's touch key pad.

*Box Jockey* features a warehouse worker who must make his way through 130 different mazes without hitting a dead end. *Tetris* is the familiar tumbling block game and *Hatris* features tumbling hats that must be stacked. *Organizer Chess* provides six levels of difficulty and stores up to 10 games, as players compete against each other or the Wizard.

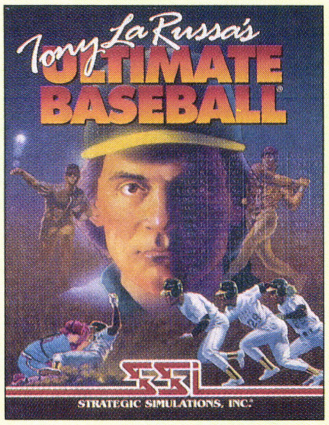
The Wizard features a full typewriter keyboard and either 64K or 128K RAM memories. The ten-ounce units hold built-in functions such as outline processor, business cards, calendar, telephone, schedule, memos, calculator and a world clock. Information can be transferred from a Wizard to the IBM PC and compatibles, and the units connect to a printer or to a modem for data transfer.

### SSI's Scratch-Off Will Send Two to the World Series

The top prize in the Strategic Simulations, Inc. (SSI), Scratch-Card Contest is a baseball-lover's dream; a trip for two to the 1992 World Series. Scratch-off cards enclosed in the first 50,000 units of *Tony LaRussa's Ultimate Baseball* will give prizes to over 2,500 purchasers. The company estimates that one out of every seven buyers will win.

Prizes include Wilson fielder gloves, autographed baseballs, Buckshot professional hand grip sticks, subscriptions to various magazines, Mizuno batting gloves, computer games, plus the grand-slam winner's trip to the Series.

*Tony LaRussa's Ultimate Baseball* is available for IBM PC and Commodore 64/128 computers for $49.95. It combines statistical modeling with action game play and is currently available in most software stores. It also can be ordered direct from Electronic Arts by calling (800) 245-4525.




### Companies Court Edu-Bucks

Quality software for young learners will be plentiful this holiday season. Several software publishers have outstanding new programs for young computerists, including some hot sequels to already proven tutors.

Microlllusions' *Discovery 2.0* (Amiga, $69.95) updates and improves the original hit program. Kids explore five spaceships while they study spelling and math. Expansion disks cover geography, history, language, science, social studies and trivia, and the lessons are tailored for a wide range of ages, from kindergarten through high school.

*New Math Blaster Plus* (Davidson/IBM PC, Macintosh, $59.95) introduces a new problem-solving game, plus better sound, animation and graphics and covers addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, fractions, decimals and percentages in six levels of difficulty for elementary school kids ages 6 to 12.

Britannica Software's Berenstain Bears are the on-screen helpers in *The Berenstain Bears Learn About Letters* and *The*

# All the graphics, all the action, all the stats!

SSI sets the standard with TONY LA RUSSA'S ULTIMATE BASEBALL. When the premier manager of pro baseball puts his name on a game, you know it has to be the very best: State-of-the-art graphics and ultra realistic action. Ballparks with different fence distances, wind conditions and turf surfaces. *And all the stats*: 49 batting, 14 fielding and 44 pitching stat categories! Sorted any way you like. You make the call.

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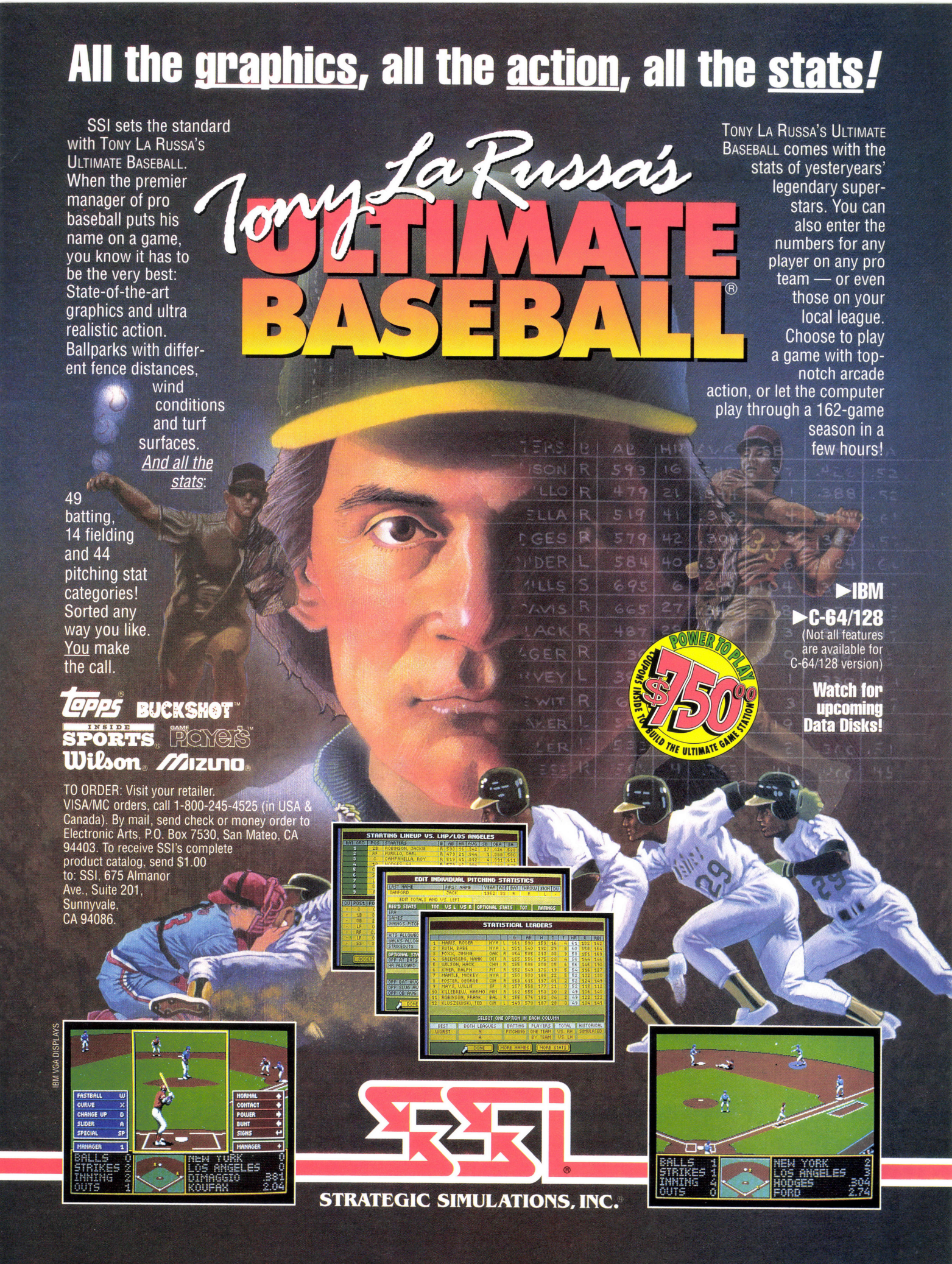

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IBM VGA DISPLAYS

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS, INC.®

*Berenstain Bears Fun With Colors* (both IBM PC, $39.95 each). The first features a bearish adventure-quest to fill the alphabet book (for ages three through seven), and the second allows kids (three through ten) to color, animate and print pictures. It features 18 bear-country backgrounds and a bank of clip art to paste in for personalized animated scenes.

*Kid Pix*, originally introduced for the Macintosh, now has an IBM PC version (Brøderbund, $59.95). This paint program for kids has special effects, a clip-art section of "rubber stamps," on-disk pictures that appear when you erase and a bank of wacky brushes to create really strange effects. There's a kaleidoscope section that remakes pictures into near-psychedelic art and other features to make this a special child-pleaser that adults enjoy too.

*Swamp Gas* (Inline Design/Macintosh, $49.95) teaches geography to elementary students or adults. Up to four players are cast as extraterrestrials who must move from place to place and answer geography trivia questions. After each mission there's a visit to the mother ship's alien arcade to play arcade-style games; Stinky Snakes, Nerdoids and Quasar Klutzs.

## Book Guides PC Upgrades

Got the out-of-date PC blues? State-of-the-art games require top equipment, and Osborne/McGraw-Hill has a new book to guide computerists through the fog. *Upgrading PCs Made Easy* (Bud & Alex Aaron, $19.95, 459 pages) explains when and how to upgrade a computer, with explanations and illustrations that cover memory increases, boosting processing power and speed, installing floppy and hard disk drives, replacing and maintaining power supply and adding peripherals (mouse, joystick scanner, printer, etc.).

The book focuses on IBM PCs and compatibles and XT, AT and PS/2 computers.

## Software Maker Sponsors Rally Entry

Inline Design, Frank C. Brooks, Jr., and Sequel Development Corp. got together to sponsor an entry in the 1991 Cannonball One Lap of America Road Rally. Inline Design's President Darryl Peck drove a 1990 Acura Legend Sedan in the four-day 2,800-mile event.

This event started in 1984 with an eight-day, 8,900-mile drive around the entire perimeter of the USA. The race evolved into a multiskill competitive event in which drivers must do high-speed track racing and road rallying. This year, 83 entries went to the Nelson Ledges race track, Watkins Glen, Pocono Raceway, Charlotte Motor Speedway, Road Atlanta, Indianapolis Raceway Park and Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Inline President Darryl Peck was asked what this had to do with Macintosh games. His reply, "Absolutely nothing, but as a game publisher it is important to know how to have a good time."

## Sampler Previews Game Trio

Spectrum HoloByte is trying a new marketing ploy. The software manufacturer is giving players a pre-buy look at three games on the *3 Game Sampler: Fly It Drive It Play It.* The $3.99 IBM PC format disk contains a playable demo of the company's F-16 fighter simulation, *Falcon 3.0.* There's also a behind-the-wheel demo of *Stunt Driver*, plus an interactive demo of *Faces...Tris III*, which lets the player form faces from the tumbling blocks.

Gamers who buy the sampler can get a $5 rebate or a *Falcon 3.0* patch after purchasing any two of the games. The disk is available at most software stores or from Spectrum HoloByte at (415) 522-3584.

## Top Coin-Ops of July 1991

Figures courtesy of *RePlay* magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

### Best Upright Videos

1. *Final Lap 2* by Namco
2. *Race Drivin'* by Atari
3. *The Simpsons* by Konami
4. *Steel Gunner* by Namco
5. *GP Rider* by Sega
6. *Indy Heat* by Leland
7. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
8. *Galaxy Force* by Sega
9. *Desert Assault* by Data East
10. *Mad Dog McCree* by Betson/Icat

### Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Street Fighter II* by Capcom
2. *Burning Fight* by SNK
3. *Sengoku* by SNK
4. *Clutch Hitter* by Sega
5. *King of the Monsters* by SNK
6. *Blue's Journey* by SNK
7. *Raiden* by Fabtek
8. *Final Fight* by Capcom
9. *Gun Force* by Irem
10. *High Impact* by Williams

### Best New Videos

1. *Sonic Blastman* by Taito
2. *F-15* by MicroProse
3. *Laser Ghost* by Sega

## Top 10 IBM PC Video Games for June 1991

The Software Publishers Association's hit list for June shows the best-selling IBM PC computer games and video games based on sales by Babbages, Comp-USA, Waldensoftware and Electronics Boutique.

Two state-of-the-art games dominate sales. Sierra's *King Quest V* continued in the number-one spot on the computer list, and *Sonic the Hedgehog* (from Sega, for play on the Genesis) rolled into first on the video-game list.

### Top 10 IBM PC Games for June 1991

| This Mo. | Last Mo. | Title | Publisher |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 | *King's Quest V* | Sierra On-Line |
| 2 | 2 | *Jetfighter II* | Velocity |
| 3 | 5 | *Wing Commander* | Origin |
| 4 | * | *Flight Simulator* | Microsoft |
| 6 | 3 | *Eye of Beholder* | SSI |
| 7 | 7 | *SimCity* | Maxis |
| 8 | 6 | *A-10 Tank Killer* | Dynamix/ Sierra |
| 9 | 9 | *Links* | Access |
| 10 | 8 | *SimEarth* | Maxis |

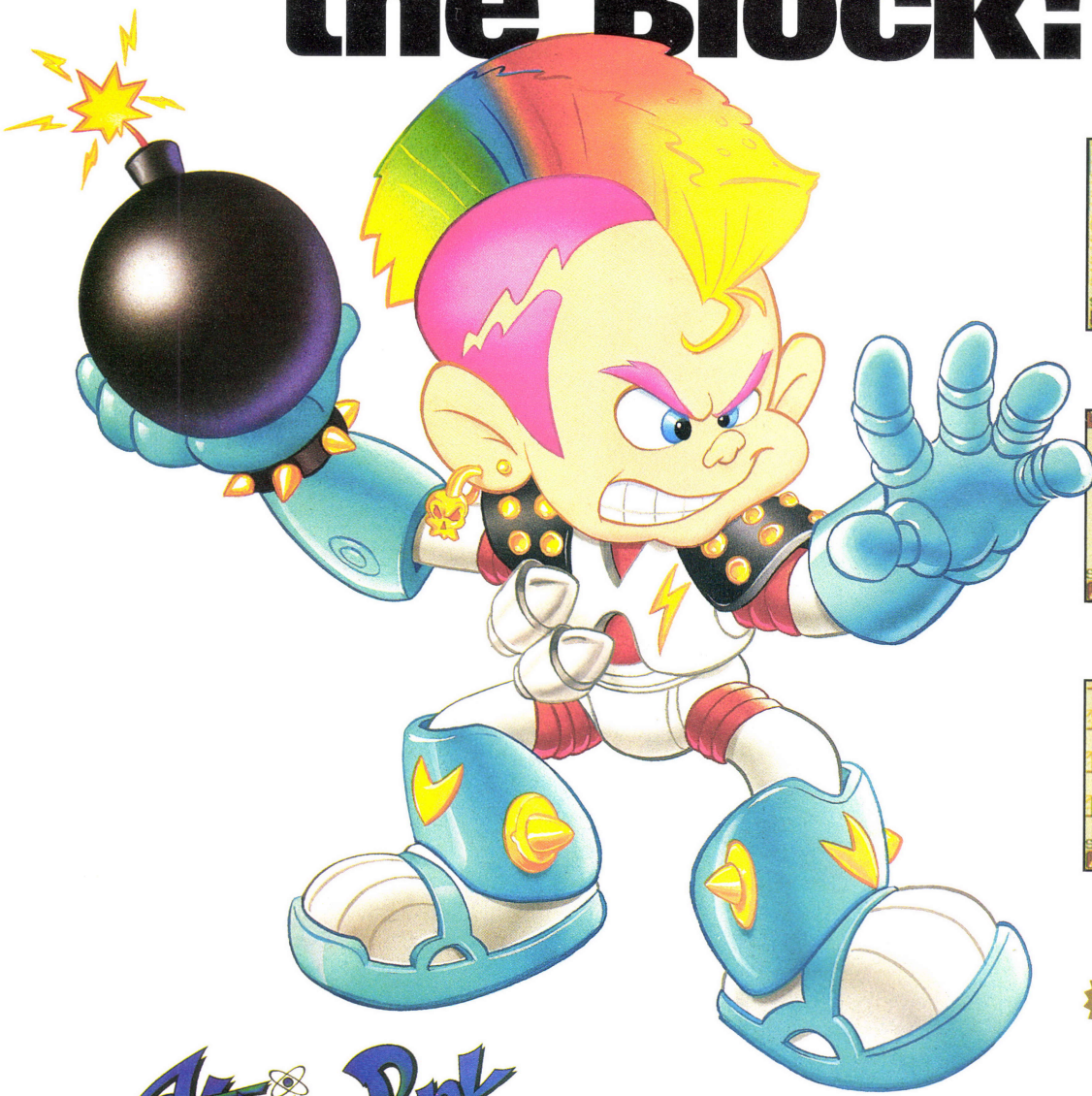
* First month in the Top 10.

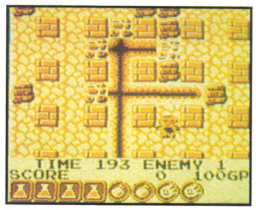
### Top 10 Video Games for June 1991

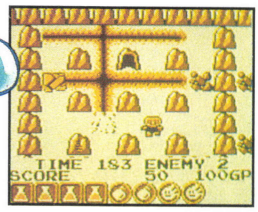
| This Mo. | Last Mo. | Title | Publ./System |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | * | *Sonic* | Sega/Genesis |
| 2 | * | *Hardball!* | Accolade/ Genesis |
| 3 | * | *Battletoads* | Tradewest/ NES |
| 4 | 1 | *Super Mario Land* | Nintendo/GB |
| 5 | * | *Batman* | Sunsoft/ Genesis |
| 6 | 3 | *Lakers vs. Celtics* | EA/Genesis |
| 7 | * | *Star Control* | Accolade/ Genesis |
| 8 | 7 | *Tetris* | Nintendo/NES |
| 9 | 8 | *NBA All Star Challenge* | LJN/GB |
| 10 | * | *Simpsons* | Acclaim/NES |

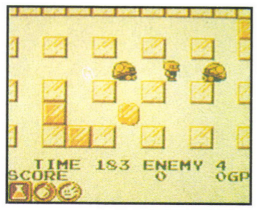
* First month in the Top 10.

# The Nuke Kid on the Block!



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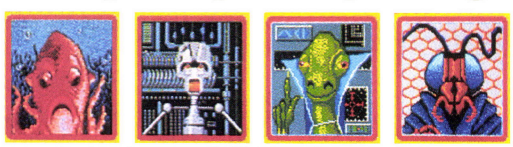
CIRCLE #114 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

*"And it isn't Toto, either, you fool,"* I snarled at the science officer. But I had this sinking feeling. We'd just completed planetary mining operations. Time to return to base and trade for weapons and some equipment (hmmm, maybe better shields?). I was half musing about the mission to save the universe. Half thinking about *Darlene-ß*, a Denebian clone I'd met last run in.



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We'd been out for days, exploring 270 star systems and 800 planets. Having hit everything from

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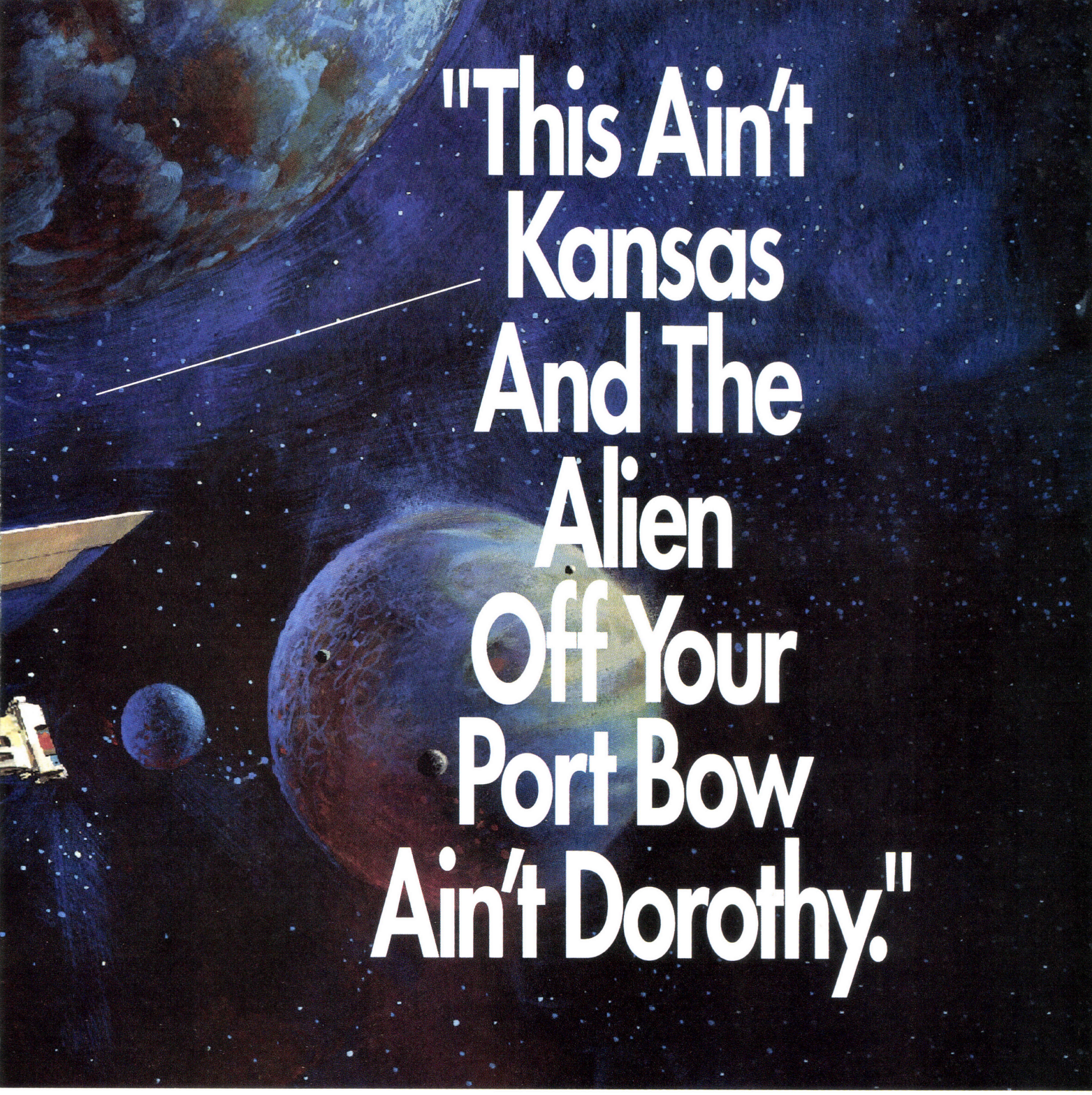


jungles to deserts, oceans to icescapes. And weather that went from awful to worse. We'd met seven of the galaxy's sentient species but these guys were different. They had to be one of the other two. Of course, I'd never finish the mission unless I parleyed. But I had only seconds to decide. Besides, I've always had an itchy trigger finger.

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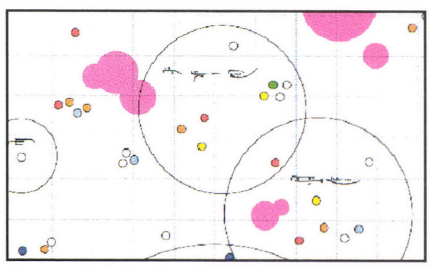

*Starmap, cluebook and mission guide included. Plus a special addition in the manual from Robert Silverberg.*

SEGA GENESIS

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***Tips are graded on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks that are colored in, the more valuable the hint.***

***Blow the dust off those old games, and try out some of our new hints! If you have some great hints and tips for us, just put them on a piece of paper, and send them to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, ATTN:* Easter Egg Hunt. *The author of each new tip we use will receive $10. Write neatly and be sure to include your name and address!***

**Here's a key to the abbreviations:**

**U = Up**
**D = Down**
**L = Left**
**R = Right**
**A = "A" button**
**B = "B" button**
**C = "C" button**

# TECHNOCOP

RazorSoft for the Genesis

Here are some helpful hints to get you through the game.

• You are TechnoCop, not RoboCop—don't try to kill every single enemy. A lot of enemies can be avoided by jumping past them, especially before you enter a building. It's possible to get through every part before you enter a building without getting hit. Simply jump over certain enemies or just run away from them. Jumping is also a good way to dodge knives or rocks when running away from an enemy after you have jumped over him. The jumping technique can be used almost anywhere in the game, but be careful of your stamina monitor. When in you're in a tight jam, it's okay to blow an enemy away—jumping won't get you through everything.

• It's also possible to kill rats by ducking and shooting. If you're going to kill a suspect, shoot your gun, and reload right before you go to him. That way you won't run out of ammo when you're trying to kill him. Similarly, if you only have a little bit of energy, kill yourself before you go to the suspect so you'll have full energy, and he won't kill you as easily.

• Driving is an essential part of the game. If you can't drive, you can't win. If you can outrun a car or truck then do it. When you're driving, always keep firing your cannon, and try to destroy as many cars as you can without slowing down too much.

• When you're ramming sideways, don't ram too hard, or you'll go right off the road with your enemy. If you have the wheel rams, it is possible to ram lightly and still knock your enemy off the road.

• Save your nuclear torpedoes in Stages 4 through 7. Stages 8-11 are each around 30 miles long, and you'll need the torpedoes then. If you have low energy and are near the end of the road, you can stop as soon as you hear the alarm; wait a little while and you'll still pull over.

• On high levels when there are trucks with jumpers, ram the trucks. It will usually knock the jumpers off or make them disappear. If a jumper lands on your car, shake back and forth to shake it off.

# Sonic the Hedgehog

Sega for the Genesis

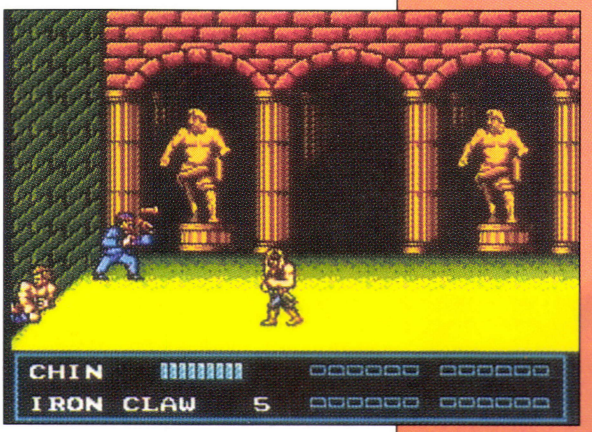
To access the edit mode, during the title screen, press U, C, D, C, L, C, R, **START** and then press and hold A. If you have done this correctly, you should see the coordinates in place of a score. Press B to change Sonic into different characters found in that stage. The A button lets you cycle through the characters and the C button lets you put them into play.

You can also create a slow-motion feature if you use the edit mode described above, pause the game, then press and hold B.

# Double Dragon III

ACCLAIM FOR THE NES

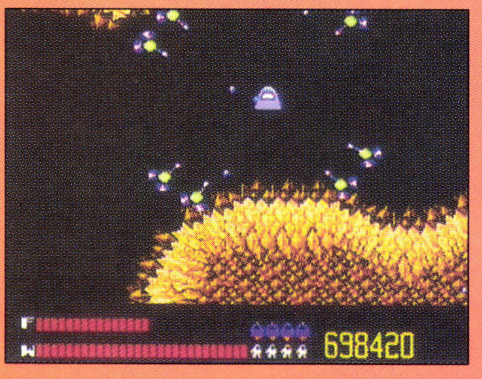
Lawrence Lee of San Francisco, California, found some interesting bugs in this game. If you switch to Chin Seimei's Iron Claw, then go through the first door of Mission 4—Italy, the claw will turn into what looks like a broken bottle. And, sometimes, if you knock the enemy's weapon out of his hand with your transformed Iron Claw, the enemy's weapon will transform into other objects as well. Also, when you enter the Ninja Room (second room in the pyramid) of Mission 5—Egypt with the Iron Claw, it will turn into shurikens. Thanks, Lawrence, for the interesting eggs.

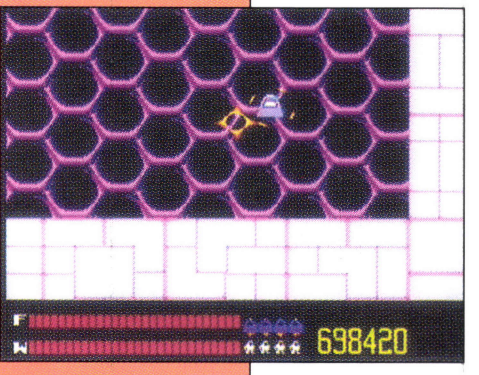


# Solar Jetman

TRADEWEST FOR THE NES

Tim White of Duncan, Oklahoma, has found an invisible warp that's not mentioned in the game's instruction booklet. To find it, enter this code to reach the third planet, "Omebru," of the Zandor system: **MBBHKBPQTDNM**. Now fly to the right, and go down at the first opening. Continue to fly to the right until you reach a circular formation of grenade-spitting bad guys. Now work your way into the center, and spin in place while firing the pod's cannon. If all goes well, your pod should be sucked into the invisible door. Once inside, you'll be attacked by a very formidable guardian robot, but you don't have to fight this robotic creature—just work your way to the right until you see three star-shaped Warp Gates. The first will lead to World 5, the next to World 6 and the last to World 7. Regardless of which gate you choose, you'll automatically be awarded the Golden Warship parts from the preceding worlds. The thing to remember when in the middle of the circular formation is *not* to destroy all the bad guys. Thanks, Tim, for this great find.



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# VIDEO GAME REVIEWS

## ActRaiser

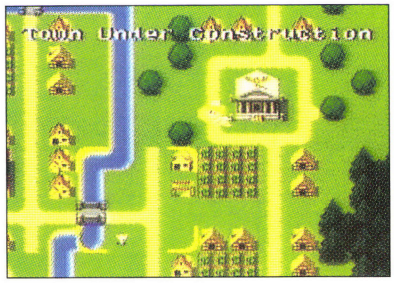
**ENIX**

**For the Super NES (NA)**

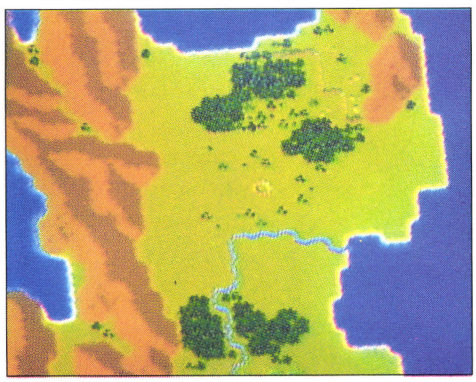
| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | **10** |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | **10** |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | **9** | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | **10** |

The land is dark and quiet, and people haven't settled in the area for hundreds of years. Meanwhile, monsters have crept in slowly and inhabited the region. During this time you were lost in deep sleep, until one day when you were awakened by an angel. Now you set forth, with the aid of your new-found friend, to rid the land of the demons.

The game is split into seven areas or lands and broken up into three modes of play. Each land is made up of two acts or action modes and one simulation mode. In the first act you take on the first wave of bad guys. (Your weapon through much of the game is a sword though there is one instance where you pick up a wave-type weapon.) Once you've defeated them, you'll get to direct the layout of the town in the simulation phase. Things aren't quite that easy. You still have monsters that are held up in lairs, and they make things difficult for you. For example, the blue dragons like to zap houses as quickly as the townspeople can build them, and Napper bats like to carry off the townspeople as well.



As the master of the land, you have the powers to use natural elements, such as lightning, rain and earthquakes, to rid the land of rocks, brush, deserts and other obstacles that might hinder progress. It's also during this stage of play that you'll find other items that will either help you in the acts or in the other simulation modes. You can find such items as the four magical spells (fire, star-dust, aura and light), which will help you defeat the various enemies you'll face. The leaders of one town have worked the townspeople too hard, and now they're fighting amongst themselves. That is, until they hear the beautiful music of the harp, another item you can use.



It's important for you to build the population of the towns. Your maximum life gauge and spell points—which determine how many of the natural elements you can use—are based on the level you have reached. This, in turn, is based on the number of people that have populated the region. Once you have ridded the land of the monster lairs, the boss of each level will put some dreaded curse on the people or threaten them to make sacrifices, and you'll have to battle the boss to free the people. Then there are other natural enemies (for example, a plague) that will affect your followers. The only way to cure them is to find the herbs. But where could they be? Another region perhaps?

I can't think of a game, not even on CD, that has better graphics. Everything from the smallest person to wheat crops to the largest end bosses have great detail. The sound and music of *ActRaiser* are equally incredible. While the action scenes have a fast-paced upbeat tempo, the simulation modes have music that would be reminiscent of medieval times with a lot of flutes, string instruments and harp music.

*ActRaiser* has taken some of the best types of game play and combined them into one setting. You have the action scenes found in games like *Ninja Gaiden* as well as the strategy found in games like *Populous* or *SimCity*. I only wish some of the end bosses were more difficult to defeat. It seems most of them can be defeated by using your available magic or running up to them and pounding them faster than they can hit you (though you will need to have a pattern for the bosses later in the game).

Overall, *ActRaiser* is an incredibly fun game to play. The action scenes have various ways you can take to get to the end boss, so it doesn't always have to be the same every time you play. *ActRaiser* is a must for all Super NES owners.

—Donn Nauert

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## Micro Machines

**CAMERICA**

**For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($49.95)**

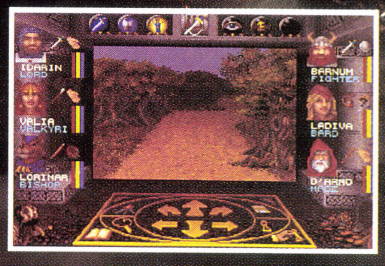
| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | **9** | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |

When a game is based on a "license," it's often a dud that has been rushed to market as a way to cash in on another

Wizardry I

A Fantasy Role-Playing Simulation by D.W. Bradley

# CRUSADERS *of the* DARK SAVANT



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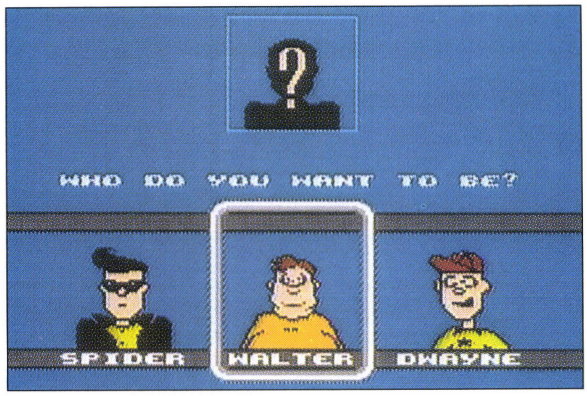
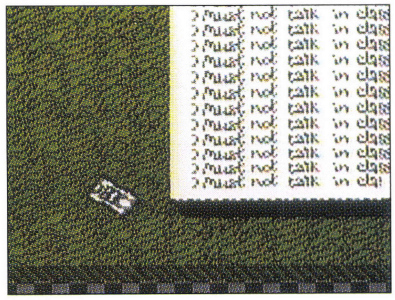
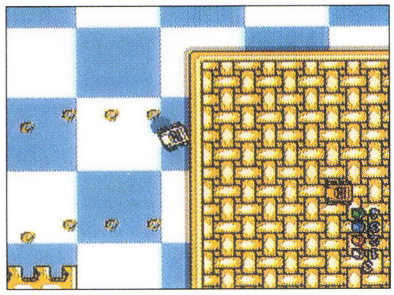
product's popularity. So when *Micro Machines* arrived, you could've cut the cynicism with a knife. It seemed burdened with a double whammy: another racing game (yawn) based flimsily around a product that appeals primarily to the under-8 crowd. That was what I was expecting, anyway.




Well, I've spent the last week eating major crow. There's more imagination and fun packed into *Micro Machines* than in any half-dozen racing games I've played since the days of the Atari 2600. No, the graphics aren't state of the art, but they're wonderfully clever. The racing isn't complicated, but it's as wild and rollicking as *Super Off-Road.* Even the sounds are great, and the concept is so good—but so simple—that it has restored my faith that there *is* originality still to be found in video gaming.





Here's the twist: Micro Machines are tiny little racing vehicles (nine varieties of dune buggies, boats, tanks, helicopters, sports cars, monster trucks and more). What more logical place to race them than the places kids really use them? So you race on the kitchen table, dodging maple syrup, breakfast cereal and spilt milk. Or you race on the garage floor, avoiding glue spots, oily patches, nails, nuts and bolts, whatever. Pool tables, school desks, bedroom floors, sandboxes, backyard gardens and even the bathtub make up the race courses, which are filled with dozens of hazards made out of gargantuan versions of everyday objects. It's like racing in the land of the giants.

Control of the vehicles is extremely simple. The courses are viewed from overhead, and the vehicles are steered left or right simply by pushing the joystick left or right (as in *R.C. Pro-Am*). One button accelerates, one button throws you into reverse. You can race against three computer-controlled opponents in a 32-course extravaganza or head-to-head with another human in either a tournament or single-course mode.

There are an even dozen computer opponents to choose from, each with individual personalities and strategies. The personalities come out when the characters lose: They kick and scream or cry or hang their heads in shame. When they win, they're similarly unrestrained. Their individual strengths and weaknesses are explained in the manual, and this is a point of strategy: You learn which of the characters are toughest for you to beat, and you play against them first in the tournament so that you can (hopefully) eliminate them early on.

**Micro Machines is a hilarious, totally lighthearted, but definitely challenging, racing game.**

As mentioned earlier, the graphics aren't sophisticated, but they're more fun and pack more surprise than any of the realistic racing games. The vehicles are always taking wild leaps and bounces, knocking into each other like bumper cars (sometimes exploding), careening madly around corners, spinning into pool table pockets or down the bathtub drain. They're highly responsive, and each type of vehicle has different handling characteristics. The surfaces have different characteristics, too—you skid in the sandbox constantly, the school desks are slippery, etc.

The sounds are excellent: lots of screeching, bouncing and thudding, and the roar of opponents' cars gets louder the closer you are to them. When you're behind and catching up, you can actually hear them before you can see them.

Overall, *Micro Machines* is a hilarious, totally lighthearted, but definitely challenging, racing game. It's just as exciting for adults—maybe more—as for real *Micro Machines* connoisseurs (the kiddies). All it lacks is a mode for simultaneous four-human play—that might make it a perfect 10.

—Josh Mandel

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## Shining in the Darkness

**SEGA**

**For the Sega Genesis ($79.95)**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |

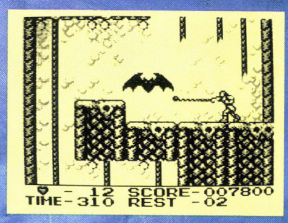
For Genesis owners, the *Phantasy Star* series has long been the only role-playing game in town. But *Shining in the Darkness* may just have what it takes to overshadow the *Phantasy Star* series. It's strong in all the areas where *Phantasy Star* is weak and offers a totally different execution.

This is another rescue-the-king's-daughter scenario, and you're the only knight in town brash enough to attempt the feat. The princess has been spirited away into the "Labyrinth," an enormous multilevel structure populated by thousands of monstrosities. To find the girl, you'll need to enter the Labyrinth and hack your way into its deepest recesses.

However, you can't just blithely walk into the place—you must first prove yourself

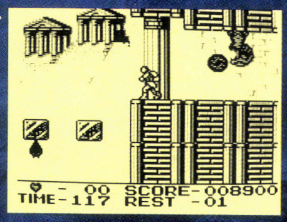
# LOOKS LIKE DRAC'S BACK IN TOWN.

Something immortal is lurking in the mountains above Transylvania. The Prince of Darkness has formed a monolith of unspeakable horror in the second ghastly adventure, Castlevania II—Belmont's Revenge™. Four towering castles ridden with hideous creatures that would even make the mightiest of warriors cower in fear.




Nevertheless, Christopher Belmont must set out to face mobile brain matter, undead assassins, and the Iron Doll in the Stone Castle. Ghastly forces like Kumlo & Nimbler and flesh feeding jellyfish slither through the Cloud Castle. The Plant Castle is the horrific home of Angle Mummy, carnivorous Wolf Spiders and other slimy swamp mutants. And an unspeakable array of acid spewing snake heads and moat monsters lurk in the Crystal Castle. It's crucial that you find power up items to attain battle axes and holy water, your only hope against this underworld army.

So grab your Mystic Whip and say your good-byes. Darkness will soon be upon you.



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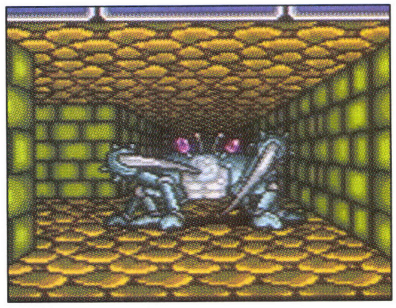
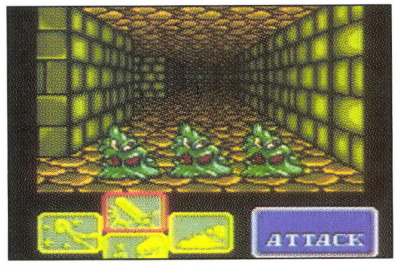
CIRCLE #118 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

worthy by gaining the marks of strength, courage, wisdom and truth. Earning these marks requires you to explore four training dungeons. You'll also earn enough gold coins during the trials to start to outfit yourself with decent armor and weaponry. When you've finished the four trials, the Labyrinth proper opens, and the *real* fighting begins!

In structure, the game resembles the *Wizardry* series. There's only one maze (actually many mazes intricately strung together), parts of which only become accessible once you've completed certain subgoals or found the proper items. There's only one village and, thus, only one weapons shop, one armor shop, one magic shop and so on. Unlike the *Phantasy Star* series, there's no lengthy bookkeeping necessary to keep track of varying prices and items among dozens of stores. But you will need to map extensively. The mazes are much more complex than those in *Phantasy Star*. In some levels, there are numerous pits and traps, dead ends, chests (containing gold, equipment or hidden enemies) and "spinners," which spin you around and disorient you. Fortunately, one of your magic users is bound to have a "view" spell, which will show you where you are in the maze. This magical auto-mapping feature makes your job far easier than it otherwise would have been.

**Sega's *Shining in the Darkness* uses more animation than seen in previous video-game RPGs.**





Although *Shining in the Darkness* has been in release overseas for some time, it's nothing like the role-playing games usually imported from Japan. The animation style is much more Disneyesque, with expressive characters as opposed to the usual stiff Japanimation style. The conversational English is much more natural. Basically, I was surprised to learn that the game isn't an American original.

The graphics are quite good, using more animation of the enemy creatures than in other video-game RPGs. First-person perspective is used in all the dungeons, and the scrolling is smooth, even when turning corners. Most impressive of all are the animated sequences accompanying the use of magic: ice crystals funnel toward the enemy in perspective; blasts of flames pop around the screen like fireworks; fires blaze and crackle; phantoms twist and spin; and so on, depending on which spells you cast. The game definitely offers the most magical bang for your buck.

There's not nearly enough variety in the music to cover the many days this game will take you. However, the sound effects are great, and it's worth keeping the sound turned on to hear them. Particularly effective are the sounds of magic spells and the grunts and shrieks of fallen foes.

*Shining in the Darkness* is both challenging and highly rewarding. The interface is not only easy to learn, but slick and downright amusing. Combat is nicely balanced with exploration, and the battery backup and file utilities are nice luxuries. The mazes are complex, and the characters actually have—gasp—real character! In short, this game is pure role-playing satisfaction.

—J. M.

Sega of America
130 Shoreline Drive
Redwood City, CA 94065
(415) 502-2800

## Shatterhand

**JALECO**
**For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($49.95)**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **6** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |

With so many games featuring mind-boggling weapons of destruction that must be used to tame the universe, it's nice to occasionally find a game that puts the future of Earth right in your own two hands—well, sort of.

The year is 2030. Medicine and technology have progressed to the point where many limbs can be reproduced and fitted to humans. *Shatterhand* is the code name for a man fitted with a pair of cybernetic hands that give him extraordinary strength.

As is the case with all new technology, the military has an interest in it, and scientists are put to work developing military applications for this new technology. Of course, the usual band of "mad scientists" have gotten together and are scheming for world domination by secretly creating an army of cyborg battle critters.

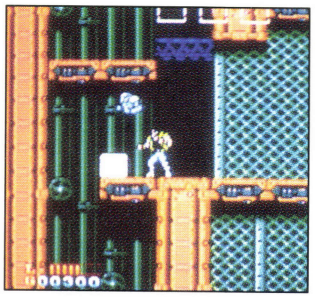
Storyline aside, if it sounds as if the stage is being set for (yet) another

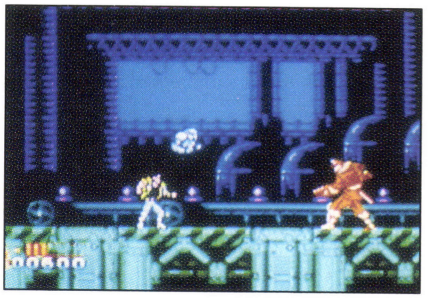
scrolling "fight through the stages until you beat the boss and advance to the next" scenario, you are pretty much on target. Not that this is necessarily bad, if you enjoy this type of contest, mind you.

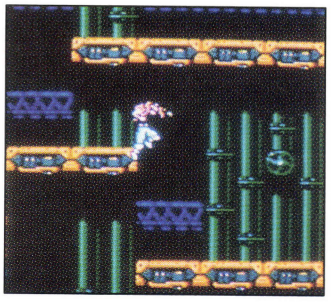
There are seven stages to be completed. The first and the last are chosen automatically for you, but the stages in between may be chosen in any order. Only one player may play—there isn't a two-player mode.

Although your character isn't equipped with any weapons personally, he can use one of eight different satellite drones by picking up special icons along the way. The icon can be switched between one of two symbols, and three symbols must be collected for the drone to appear. The order of the symbols is what determines which drone will appear. These drones aren't invincible, however, and take damage and are destroyed in the same fashion that you are. If you manage to collect the same sequence of symbols twice in a row (and your drone is still functional), you will become invincible for approximately 15 seconds—an especially handy feature in the last area of the game.

Other than these drones, it's strictly hand-to-hand combat all the way. A few other power-ups and 1-Ups are available as well, but the manner for getting them is a bit different. When an enemy is wasted, coins will sometimes appear, and these coins must be saved up in order to purchase the power-up desired.







**Gamers must complete seven stages in Jaleco's *Shatterhand*.**

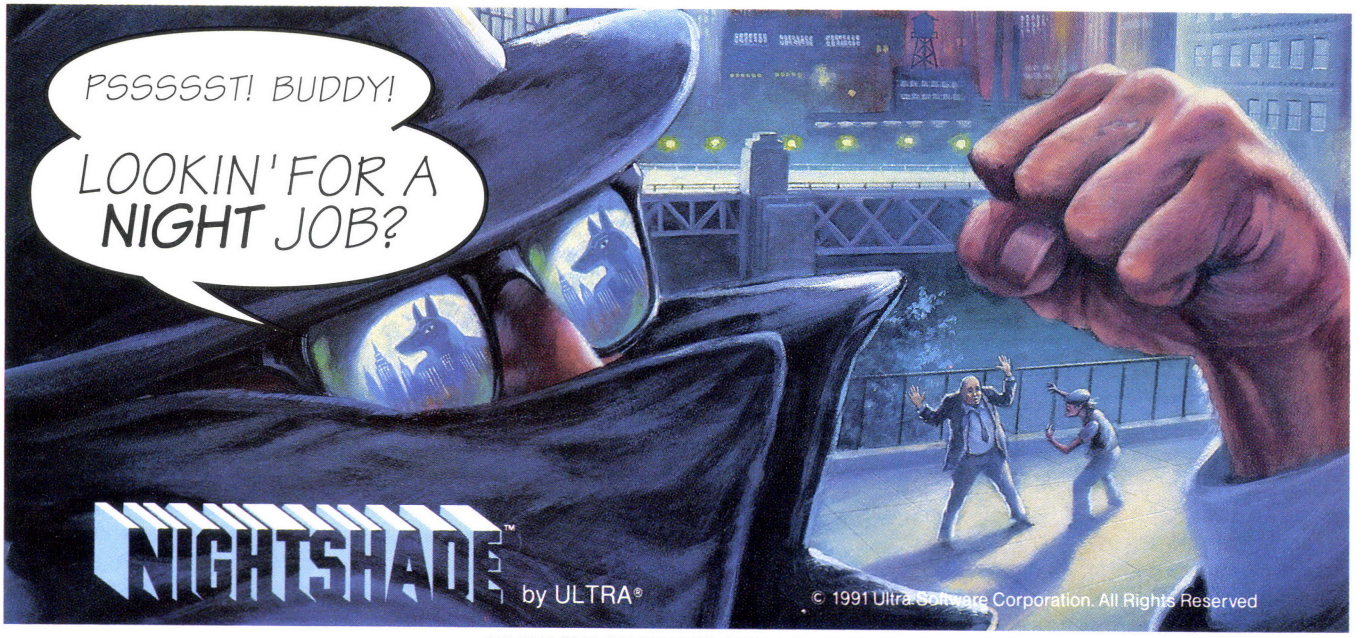
There really isn't anything drastically different in *Shatterhand*, but that doesn't make it a bad game. The action proceeds smoothly, and figuring out which drone to bring up to deal with each stage takes some thought.

The graphics are adequate for both backgrounds and critters, and each stage varies enough from the other to keep things from getting boring right away. Flickering or graphic slowdown weren't frequent enough to be a problem.

As far as being challenging, you won't likely zip through this one in an afternoon. Sure, there are apparently unlimited continues, but each continue takes away your coins and puts you back at the beginning of an area.

Getting through each area still won't take long once you figure out which drones work best and where, but just wait until that last level! Something that seems to be becoming more common is the practice of having a player defeat all of the previous bosses again in the last level, which is the case here. This makes things just a teensy bit more difficult, believe me.

Basically, *Shatterhand* is another scrolling action game (but one that plays well) with good graphics, sound and




CIRCLE #119 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

action. If you have an insatiable appetite for this type of game, or are just looking for something a bit different, you should be satisfied overall.

—Brent Walker

Jaleco USA
310 Era Drive
Northbrook, IL 60062
(708) 480-1811

## Pac-Mania

**TENGEN**

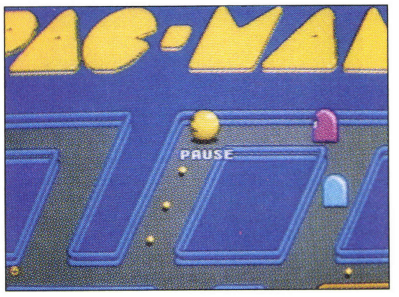
**For the Sega Genesis ($49.95)**

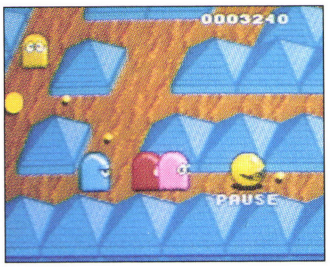
| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **6** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |

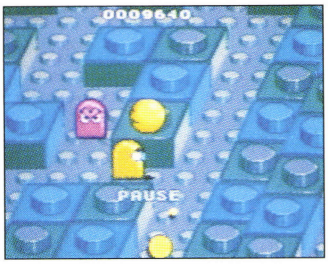
Blame premature nostalgia and "sequelitis," if you will, for the number of reappearances *Pac-Man* has made in the electronic-gaming world. Yet, those in charge of his career seem unable to bring Pac-Man back to the level of his greatest glory in 1982 when he was hot—hotter than any video-game character even today. Whereas fellow colleague Mario went from *Donkey Kong* bit player to mega-marketed corporate logo for Nintendo today, the *Pac*-guy has become like an aging rock-music icon: a legend for would-be successors to live up to but appearing antiquated and silly whenever he tries for a serious comeback.

*Pac-Man*'s last serious comeback was in 1989 with Atari Games' coin-op *Pac-Mania*, a title that pretty much said it all. It was merely a 3-D graphics version of the old *Pac-Man* game. Nobody cared for this whimsical and simple-playing offering in their local arcade. No wonder. Hey, *Pac*-programmers: Whimsical and simple playing just don't cut it with today's gamers. Give Pac-Man a power-pellet machine gun, and send him out on a mission to save Ms. Pac-Man. Then we're talking.

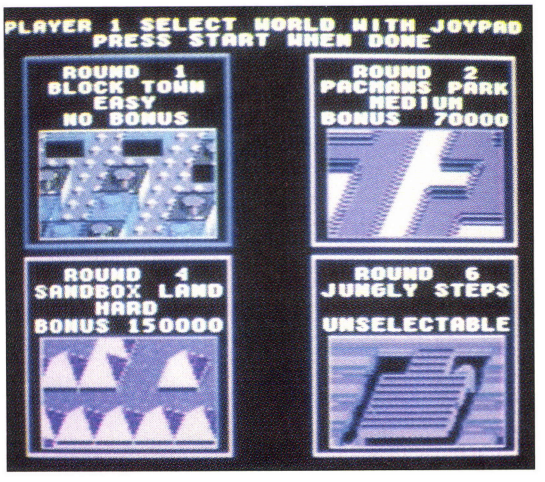
It's fortunate that the Atari Games folks thought it enough to bring *Pac-Mania* home through their Tengen "any game system—no problem" division. Now they've brought out a Genesis version. Besides the aforementioned 3-D graphics, with *Pac-Mania* you also get four different maze layouts and two additional ghosts (bringing the total to six), and Pac-Man now has the ability to leap over the ghosts—a longtime wish of *Pac-Man*iacs that finally has been realized. The familiar dots, power pellets and fruit bonuses remain.




**Tengen's *Pac-Mania* will appeal more to video-game old-timers in their twenties, than to today's younger set.**




The first maze is constructed of colorful Lego-like blocks. The second is instantly recognizable as a 3-D variant of the layout from the old *Pac-Man* arcade game. The other two are a sandbox decorated with pyramids and a series of interconnected shiny pipes. Besides being pretty to look at, these screens scroll smoothly in the four directions that Pac-Man travels.

A few of the options provided with *Pac-Mania* prove unnecessary. Not only is there an option to turn off the game's background music, but you can do the same to the sound effects. Switching both off results in game play with absolutely no sound. This comes in handy if you happen to own one of those super-hard-to-find televisions or monitors that come with no volume knobs.

Another pointless selection is the Pac-booster. This gives Pac-Man an extra burst of speed to outrun ghosts, but it doesn't work too effectively during actual play, especially when you have to deal with the jump button at the same time. The arcade version didn't have this feature.

There's no denying *Pac-Mania* will appeal more to old-timers than to today's younger set, despite efforts to convince otherwise. There was a time when games like this were all the rage. Sure, they were stupid, pointless little contests, but gosh darn it, we loved them and got to exercise our hand-eye coordination (whatever that means). With *Pac-Mania*, aging video-game geezers in their twenties now have another nostalgia trip to add to the growing list of updated classic game titles.

—Howard H. Wen

Tengen
675 Sycamore Drive
Milpitas, CA 95035
(408) 473-9400

## Parasol Stars

**WORKING DESIGNS**

**For the TurboGrafx-16 ($59.99)**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **6** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **6** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **6** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

*Parasol Stars*: *Bubble Bobble III* is similar in play to Taito's original *Bubble Bobble*. The major difference lies in the theme of the game. Instead of the bubble-blowing dinosaurs, Bub and Bob, their incarnations in *Parasol Stars* are Bubby and Bobby, boys who catch and fling water bubbles at enemies with their umbrellas.

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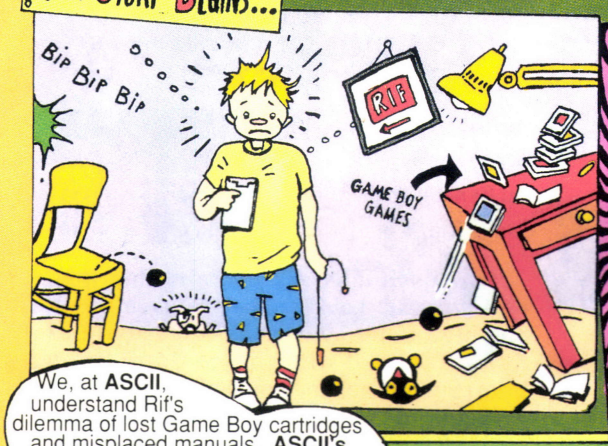
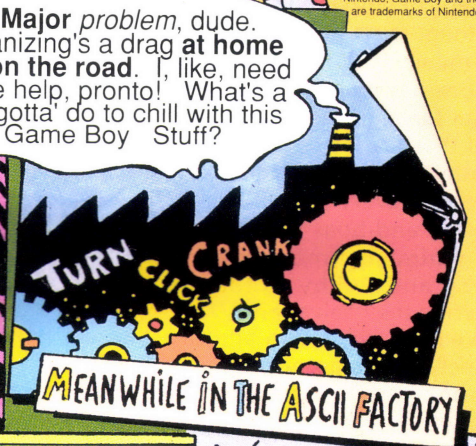
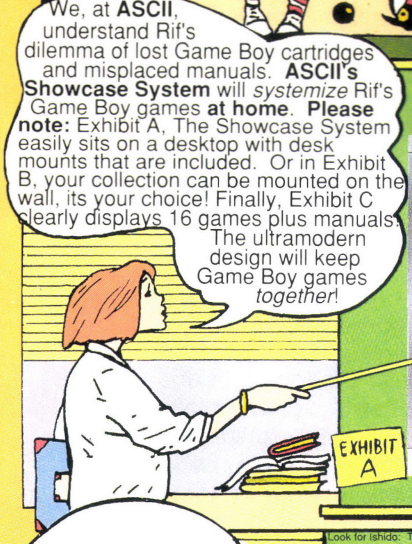
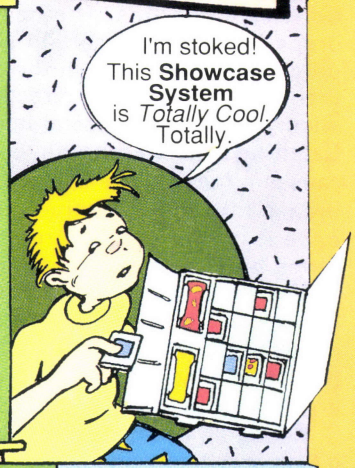


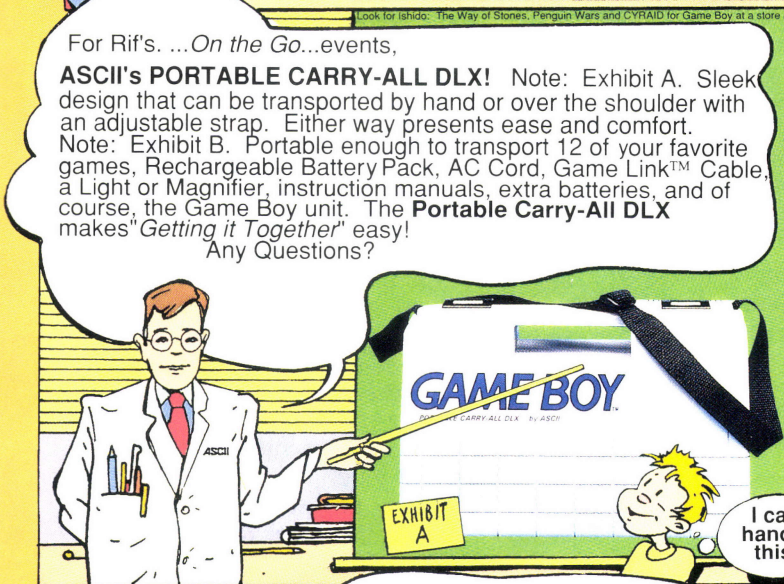



## Meanwhile in the ASCII Factory






Look for Ishido: The Way of Stones, Penguin Wars and CYRAID for Game Boy at a store near you! Also soon to be released, DOOMSAYER™: A Hero's Crusade!



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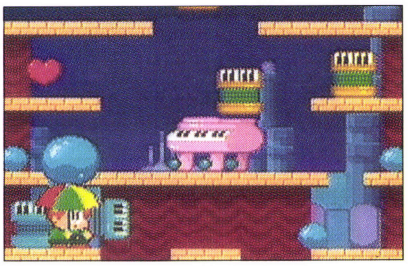
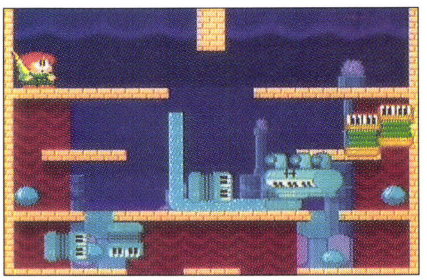
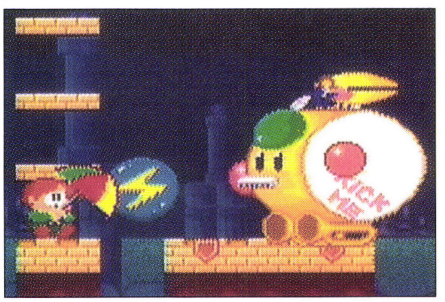
CIRCLE #120 ON READER SERVICE CARD

Responding to interplanetary SOS calls, Bubby and Bobby go from one planet to another, via umbrellas, to liberate them from armies of cuddly animals and musical instruments gone bad. Put in a more mentally conceivable way, each planet functions as the typical video-game level that features a series of screens littered with enemies to clear away. The last screen on every planet level is the ever-popular end-boss character. Defeating this whimsical monstrosity will take Bubby and Bobby to the next planet requiring their salvation.





Whereas dinos Bub and Bob had the distinct advantage of producing bubbles through their own oral secretions (ewww!), Bubby and Bobby must make do with umbrellas. They catch water drops leaking from certain spots, hold onto them with their umbrellas and then fling them in the direction of an enemy animal or musical instrument. Catching and holding several drops causes a huge water ball to form that breaks into a destructive mini-flood once it is thrown. Electrolytic water drops burst into electric sparks when Bubby and Bobby throw them—and turn into a lightning bolt when many are gathered together. As you might expect, these electrified drops are more powerful than the normal aqua drops.



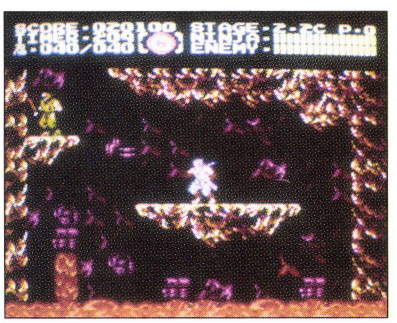

Hitting an enemy will usually faze it first, and Bubby and Bobby have to quickly catch and fling the creature before it regains consciousness and turns into a more aggressive adversary. The thrown enemy will transform into a dessert treat once it stops moving, and Bubby or Bobby can eat it for points. Getting rid of all of the creatures takes the 'brella boys to the next infested screen.

Bubby and Bobby's umbrellas have two more helpful functions. The lads can use them like parachutes or faze enemies by whopping them directly with their umbrellas. Bonus items appear at random that will grant Bubby or Bobby such gaming perks as faster movement for themselves, free lives or instant flooding of the entire game screen.

**Working Designs' *Parasol Stars* features simple game play and moderate gaming difficulty.**

*Parasol Stars* features play that is simple with moderate gaming difficulty. You can play by yourself as either Bubby or, with the addition of a TurboTap, Bobby, but the excitement and interest level isn't as high as that of cooperative and competitive play between two people. It's a nice two-player arcade game, though it's still a bit light in this area too.

—H. H. W.



Working Designs
1701 Clear Creek Road
Redding, CA 96001
(916) 243-3417

## Ninja Gaiden III: The Ancient Ship of Doom

**TECMO**

**For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($49.99)**

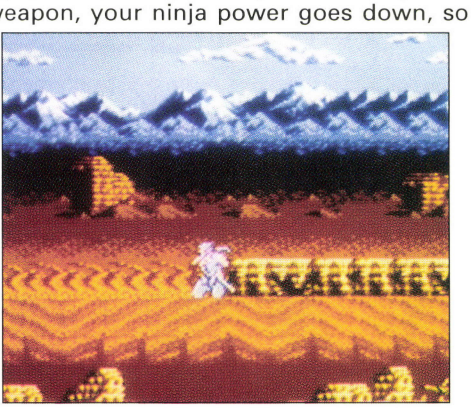
| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **6** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Ryu Hayabusa is back, and this time he's got real trouble. They're saying that he killed Irene Lew. How could that be? Ryu is sure of one thing: Something bizarre is going on, and he's determined to get to the bottom of it. Ryu decides that his best bet is to research Irene's last mission, and so the story begins with his arrival at a secret lab.

This is the third time around for *Ninja Gaiden*, and this new edition's game play is as fast and furious as that of its predecessor. If you've played the first two chapters of the ever-popular story of Ryu and Irene, you'll feel right at home leaping, spinning, climbing, slicing and blasting your way through the seven levels that make up *Ninja Gaiden III*. In this journey, you'll travel through a secret lab, a desert, an Amazon tunnel, a fortress and more. Only true ninja masters will make it through to the interdimensional warship found in Act 7, the final stage.

As with the previous games, various power-ups and weapons are available along your route of conquest. You'll find ninja stars, which shoot like boomerangs; fire wheels, which surround Ryu with an impenetrable shield; down blasts, which send fireballs down at an angle; fire shots, which send fireballs upward; super swords, which extend the range of your regular weapon; and up and downs, giant axe blades that slice apart enemies above or below you.

Of course, you must have enough ninja power to use the special weapons. Your ninja power and your health can be increased by finding ninja-power extenders or health extenders. (You'll find 1-Ups, too.) Every time you use a special weapon, your ninja power goes down, so



you must learn to conserve special weapons for special times. Knowing which weapons to hold on to is important. Luckily, in *Ninja Gaiden III*, you can tell what a weapon is before you grab it.

The game controls are slick and smooth. Considering how many moves you're capable of, it's amazingly easy to get the hang of piloting Ryu from one danger to the next. You'll master all the spinning and climbing by the end of the first level. Your friends will marvel at your joypad dexterity—until they get their turn and realize how easy it all is.

The background graphics in *Ninja Gaiden III* are detailed and colorful, and the animation smooth and believable. You'll get to battle a ton of villains in this martial arts extravaganza, each cleanly rendered. Some bosses you'll challenge include Dr. Fire, who slides fire across the floor while blocking your attacks with his shield; the Mutant Twins, who attack with ninja stars; and Fortress Fats, who keeps you jumping by blasting wherever you last stood.

All in all, *Ninja Gaiden III* is more of the high-quality, jump-and-shoot ninja action that the first two games were famous for. Its game play is simple enough to get novices started quickly, but challenging enough for even ninja gurus. Recommended.

—Clayton Walnum

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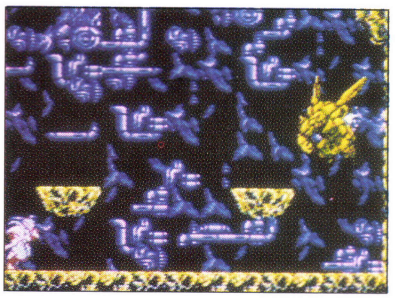
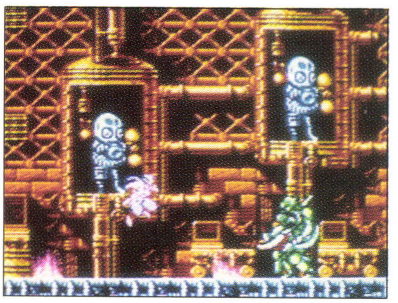




***Ninja Gaiden III: The Ancient Ship of Doom* has game play as fast and as furious as that of its predecessors.**

## Darkman

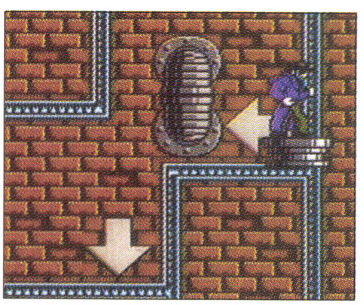
**OCEAN**
**For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($49.95)**

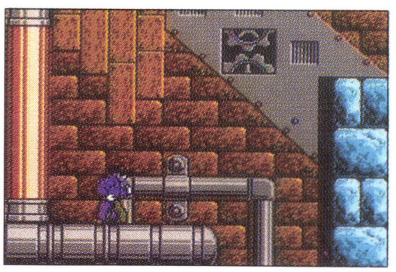
| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | **9** | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |

Lately any action movie that makes it big in the theaters is almost sure to spawn game versions at home in the manner of *Batman*, *Total Recall* and now the soon-to-be-released *Darkman*.

The storyline centers around one Dr. Peyton Westlake, a scientist working on a type of synthetic skin that could be helpful in the treatment of people with severe burns or other disfigurements. With the aid of a computer and photographs of a subject, he has made progress in creating masks that very closely resemble the person.

While trying to perfect the material, his lab was broken into by a crime organization looking for an important document. The doctor's lab is destroyed by the evil Durant, who sets a fire that also takes out Dr. Westlake—almost.





Severely burned, with little original skin left on his body and severe pain to boot, Dr. Westlake must undergo a treatment that will deaden his pain. This treatment has serious side effects, however—he suffers violent mood swings and has adrenaline rushes that give him great strength. He escapes from the hospital and becomes Darkman, determined to seek revenge against his attackers.

By salvaging some of his equipment from his lab, Darkman has managed to reconstruct the necessary equipment to continue making the synthetic skin, but now concentrates on making masks of Durant and his henchmen from photographs he takes.

*Darkman* is made up of several different and often lengthy stages and isn't a game that can be easily beaten. As each level begins, Darkman must make his way through a horizontally scrolling landscape of one sort or another and often in many directions within the same area.

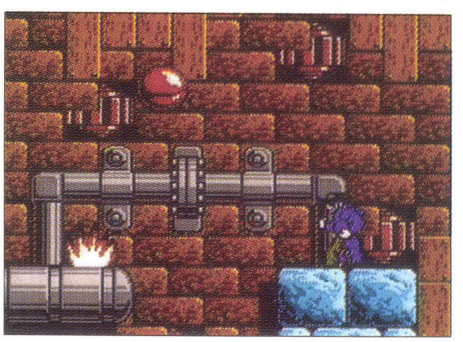
Reminiscent of *Hogan's Alley* is a photo sequence where Darkman must grab his camera and attempt to sneak snapshots of gang members while trying to avoid being shot himself. The more pictures he takes, the more time he'll be given to complete the following stage.

When Darkman assumes the identity of the villains he is attempting to defeat, his abilities change. Some characters have extraordinary jumping abilities, while others are less gifted. Accordingly, much of the challenge lies in overcoming difficult jumps and landings.

Occasionally Darkman will have a weapon, but often he is only able to kick and punch against those with guns and other weapons. Fortunately, Darkman is usually able to survive several attacks before defeat, and blue flasks picked up along the way will restore his health at the end of an area.

The backgrounds for all this action are well done, though some admittedly better than others. The fun house layout is especially interesting, while the backgrounds for Darkman's tree-leaping adventure are somewhat plain. However, how fancy do trees and water really need to be?

Occasional flickering aside, the graphics are consistent. Who can resist lending Darkman a hand as a tear rolls out of his eye



after an unsuccessful attempt? A built-in storyline option gives the rundown on what is going on from scene to scene, so everything proceeds logically.

For those that have their NES hooked up to a stereo, get the woofers out. Darkman throws some bass.The music is great, though the sound effects are perhaps somewhat average. Both music and sound effects may be turned off if they get to be a bit too much.

*Darkman* has great game play, and I was really pulled into this game. Although four lives are presented and three continues allowed, it really does take some time to make progress. A high-score table and a two-player option are also present to stimulate competition in what will surely be a successful game.

—B. W.

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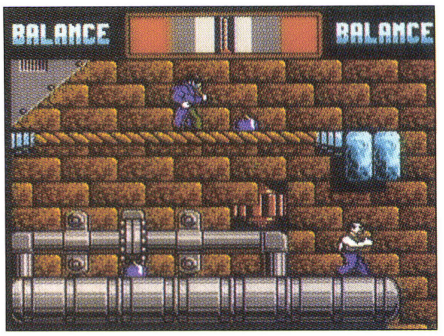


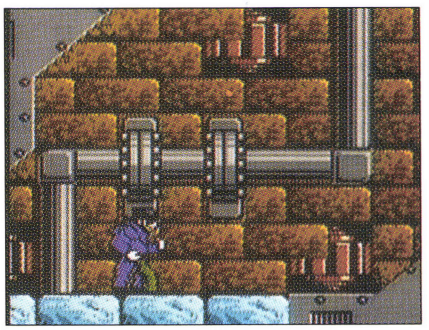

**Darkman is made up of several different and often lengthly stages, making it a game that can't easily be beaten.**

## Arcus Odyssey

**RENOVATION**

**For the Sega Genesis ($69.99)**

| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | | | | | | | | ■ | | |
| GRAPHICS | | | | | | | ■ | | | |
| PLAYABILITY | | | | | | | ■ | | | |
| OVERALL | | | | | | | ■ | | | |

*Arcus Odyssey* is an excellent example of the high-concept nature of video games these days. Like blockbuster movies, the premise of many games can now be summarized into just a few buzz words. *Arcus Odyssey* is 3-D *Gauntlet* with spell-casting. How simplified the game reviewer's life is today.

It's no surprise that the story that backs up *Arcus Odyssey* is uninteresting and inconsequential to game play. But the opening animated scenes are depicted spectacularly. The evil sorceress Castomira has taken the Sword of Light from her good counterpart, Leaty. It's up to you (and a friend, if one is available) to trek into Castomira's mountain domain, destroying her minions along the way, and retrieve the Sword of Light.

In traditional *Gauntlet* style, players get to choose from four adventurers of varying offensive and defensive ability. Regardless of character, everybody has, at least on a minimal level, spell-casting powers. How powerful a character's spell-casting is depends upon both the current gaming level and items that are retrieved.

Throughout the seven levels in Castomira's mountain, treasure chests are to be found and opened. The treats they contain include spells, helpful items and automatic restoration of your character's life energy. Spells can perform tasks like healing your character from life-sapping poisons and obliterating the bad guys off the screen. Some items to take are keys that can unlock prisons and exit doors and Dolls of Life, which resurrect your character upon death.

Your characters will need to work their way through differing kinds of environments like dungeons, pyramids, rivers of fire and even see-through platforms high above the ground, all of which are laid out in a labyrinth. In order to find your way out and into the next level, certain things have to be done. Most only require that you find the exit (a task easier said than done). Some elevate the difficulty of this goal by making you destroy dams so as to put out fires blocking your pathway or by having you break magical mirrors. At the end there's a powerful bouncer guarding the entrance to the next level, and you and your party must bring him down.

An interesting feature of *Arcus Odyssey* is that prisoners you free can tag along with your character, greatly augmenting his or her attack power. There are even enemy characters who will join you and perform the same tasks, but these allies won't stay with you as long as your adventure lasts. Castomira's henchmen will forcefully kidnap them once you complete a specific level and thus strip you of the unfair edge.

The 3-D graphics of the gaming screens are good, though not as impressive as those displayed in the animated introduction. This is expected in any game, but it's sort of a disappointment with *Arcus Odyssey* especially. Technically, there's a bit of a slowdown caused when two people are playing and the screen is filled with enemies—definitely so when both players have an accompanying ally.

The final showdown with Castomira appears incongruous with the rest of the game's settings. It takes place in outer

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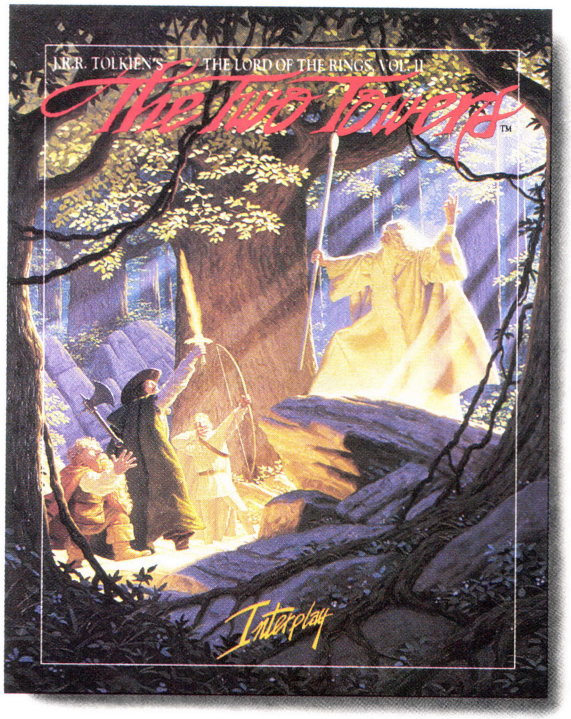


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space—or some kind of cosmic void—where Castomira attacks you in the form of a space alien or something of the like. But the biggest letdown is the end. Again, compared to the game's opening, the ending displays what could possibly be the dullest, most long-winded scrolling epilogue in video-gaming history. Had the programmers simply removed the opening, perhaps these faults in *Arcus Odyssey* wouldn't have seemed so bad.

Still, *Arcus Odyssey* dutifully provides excitement with moderate difficulty in skill. For two players, it takes only less than four hours to complete this game from beginning to end. Thus, if you can manage to rent *Arcus Odyssey* from your video store, it will provide a nice evening's worth of entertainment.

—H. H. W.

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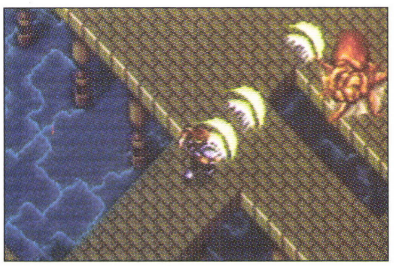
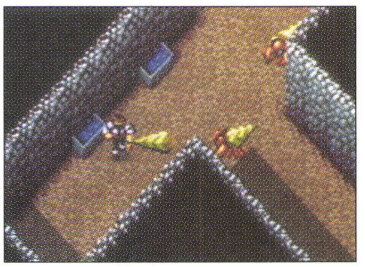




## Dragon Warrior III

**ENIX**

**For the Nintendo Entertainment System (NA)**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | **4** | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | **3** | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | **5** | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | **4** | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Many gamers shy away from computer role-playing games, believing them to be lengthy and repetitive. Even a true CRPG fan would have to admit that that's generally a reasonable assessment, given the incredible amounts of time spent combatting creatures. But a well-crafted CRPG balances combat with exploration, interesting characters and locations, rich plots and good storytelling. *Dragon Warrior III*, unfortunately, puts emphasis on the combat side, while other elements take a back seat.

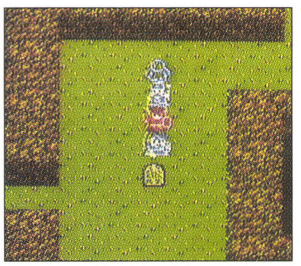
The plot appears tacked on as an afterthought. You choose your sex (which seems to make no difference; a female is even identified as a "lad," the "son of Ortega") and proceed to the castle on your 16th birthday. The king tells you that the enemy this time is the arch fiend Baramos. You're supposed to do away with him—now go to it. That's about it; a pretty thin setup for a game that takes well over 50 hours to finish.

You can add up to three additional characters to your party, choosing the character classes and names, or you can simply take three preformed characters. That's quicker, but it's more fun to name your own characters so you feel more connection with them. Having chosen your party and perhaps purchased a bit of extra equipment, it's time to leave town and start battling those monsters roaming around the countryside.

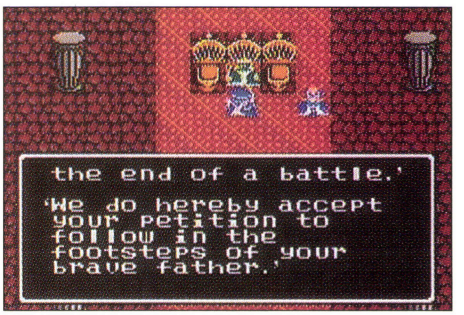
Battles can occur at literally every step you take. Luckily, the first encounters involve very mild creatures, so you're not likely to find your whole party dying off immediately—not unless you're reckless, anyway. There is no animation nor any backgrounds during combat, which makes for a pretty static, boring screen to be looking at for hours on end.

If the exploration weren't interrupted so often by combat, the game would actually rate highly. There are plenty of dungeons and towers that must be explored at length. They're intricate but not so huge that they require mapping. Towns, islands, mountains, forests, oceans and deserts are all scattered around profusely. Because the directions and advice you get from townsfolk and castle dwellers are occasionally vague, you spend some time just looking around trying to figure out where you should go next. This is a refreshing change from other CRPGs that lead you around by the nose.

*Dragon Warrior III* (which has no dragons to speak of) also has many interesting plot twists buried under all that combat. There's gambling, tricky characters who pull quick switches and some nicely convoluted puzzles. There's even a complete day and night sequence, with characters that close up shop, go to bed or come out to party at night. The armor and weaponry options are fewer than in other CRPGs, so



**Battles can occur at literally every step you take in *Dragon Warrior III*.**



that means less bookkeeping. The wide variety of useful magic spells must be carefully utilized in combat with creatures who are resistant to brute force. The battery backup allows you to save up to three games in progress, but games can only be saved in castles, which is a royal pain.

Graphics are a low point: Most of the figures are poorly defined and difficult to see. Flickering at the bottom of the screen frequently occurs during southward movement, and characters also flicker when there are five characters on the same horizontal line. What music there is is quite good, but there isn't nearly enough of it, nor is there much variation in the sound effects.

For CRPG fans who aren't deterred by a game with 75% combat and 25% quality role-playing, *Dragon Warrior III* may fill many hours. Everyone else: Hang tight till the next *Ultima* hits the shelves.

—J. M.

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## Raiden

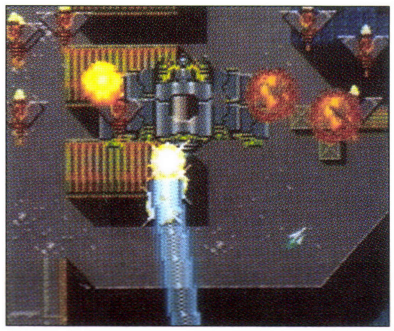
**BIGNET**

**For the Sega Genesis ($59.90)**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **6** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **6** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |

The shooter genre is probably one of the oldest types of video games. From *Galaxian* to *Blazing Lasers*, shooters have generally been countless and of little variety. Bignet's *Raiden*, based on the Irem arcade game, does not break the standards by which shooters are made as much as present them in a nice manner. It also gives the Genesis its much needed *Blazing Lasers*-type game. This game is not as varied as *Thunder Force III*, but for a straightforward shoot-'em-up it serves its purpose.

As far as object or plot goes, who cares? In standard shooters we don't concentrate on saving our universe. Our short-term goals fall more into the line of: "What do we blow up next?"



**If you've been looking for a good shooter for the Genesis, *Raiden* will fill the void.**

The game itself does not change much from start to finish. Basically, you pilot a spaceship and pick up weapons as you go along—and there's not much variety in that department. As far as choices for preliminary weapons, you can only choose between two: a machine gunlike shot and a laser. You can power-up the weapons to higher levels, however. You also have some secondary weapons in the form of rockets and missiles, which can also be powered-up.

In terms of graphics and sound, *Raiden* doesn't make full use of the Genesis' advanced features. The graphics are far from superior, but a few of the terrain

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shots look nice. Let's face it—you're not into shooters for scenery. In the same way, the sound is very arcadelike. It is not orchestral, but a steady, repetitive, monotonous rhythm that provides a backdrop for the action. The action is the true test, and this game has a fair amount, to say the least. The game also plays so fast that you don't have much time to think about what you are doing. In some scenarios, you just maneuver around and pray a bullet doesn't cross your path. In most cases, your progress can be attributed to getting lucky, but it's hard to get bored playing or blink without a bullet coming straight at your ship. Chances are that with nine levels (eight from the arcade and one new and *extremely* difficult) of nonstop action, your fingers will get tired.

Each level has its own unique look, and new enemies are introduced in each one. The basic enemies of each level are not too hard, but a few will slow you down and give you trouble. Most chances are used up on the final boss of each stage. This is where the game holds its greatest challenge, but you will find that a little experimentation of where to drop bombs will aid you. An experienced gamer will find that after a few plays, you can memorize the dos and don'ts to steadily progress through the game. The easy mode, which gives you four lives and nine continues, will give you a good chance for practice.

There are definitely better shooters, but if you've been looking for a good shooter for the Genesis, *Raiden* fills the void.

—Glenn Rubenstein

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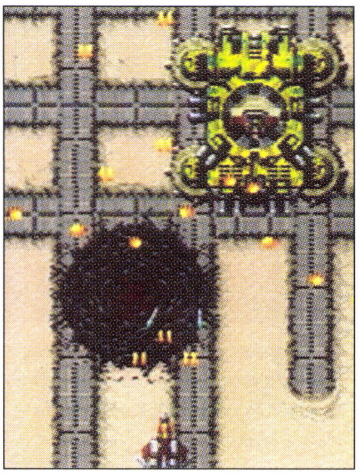
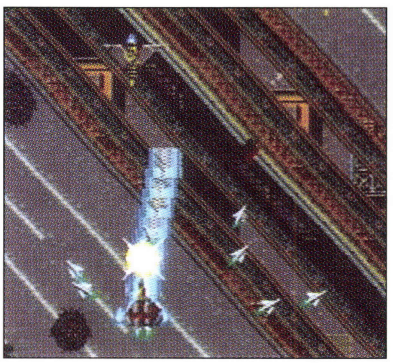




## Wolverine

**LJN**

**For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($47.95)**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | **9** | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Along with the many game heroes that were born on the NES are those given birth by other media. In this case, Wolverine, a member of the X-Men, is a comic-book character brought to life to battle his arch enemy, Sabertooth.

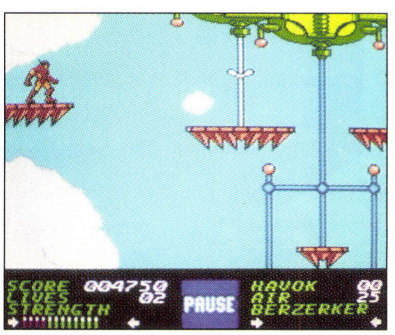
The members of X-Men are all mutants of one sort or another, and Wolverine is no exception. He gets his name from sets of foot-long indestructible claws, implanted within his forearms that can be extended at will, and from his ability to slice through just about anything. His body is also empowered with remarkable regeneration abilities that enable wounds to heal much faster than normal.

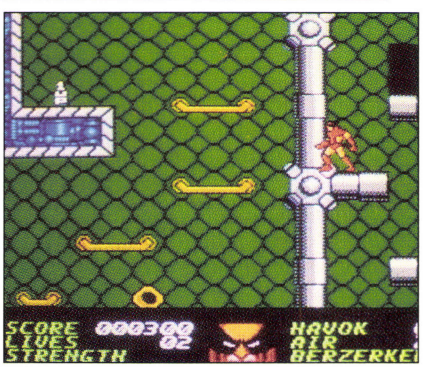
As the game begins, Wolverine has been washed up on an island without an idea as to how he has gotten there. There is only one place to go, and that's inland. But without anybody to help him, it will most certainly be dangerous. We soon learn that Sabertooth has prepared the island as a trap to permanently take out Wolverine. Nine areas of deadly machinery, traps and enemies stand between them; but then again, Wolverine is no weakling.

Basically *Wolverine* is a multilevel, multidirectional, scrolling action game. Running, jumping, swimming and crawling through each area, Wolverine must reach a doorway at the end of the level in order to escape that section.

Often it isn't much trouble to head straight for the exit if its location is known, but in order to pick up 1-Ups, food (cheeseburgers with the works!), "power potions" ( pick-me-up drinks ) and additional continues, you must thoroughly explore each level. For example, fellow X-Men member Havoc will shield Wolverine for short periods of time throughout the game so that he may regain his strength—but you have to find him first. A few other members also make brief cameo appearances to lend a hand throughout the game. When you start out, only one continue is available; after which your game will start over completely. So the extra continues and other bonus items are really worth the search.

Another feature of Wolverine is his ability/curse to go berserk on certain occasions. As enemies are killed, a "berserker" bar slowly fills up. Power potions will also add to this bar, which, when full, causes Wolverine to begin flailing about wildly—so much that he is invulnerable until his berserker energy bar is completely spent. I say ability/curse because though you are invincible, it's difficult to control Wolverine. Running and jumping are much more dangerous, especially when you are located on a high platform or near some other natural danger such as a pit full of spikes. Though this ability is not truly controllable, it does come in handy in many places regardless.




Overall, *Wolverine* does resemble several other games of the same genre, but is enjoyable nonetheless. I was actually surprised that the designers didn't feel obligated to put some sort of boss at the end of each level, which makes this game flow smoothly. I pushed my way through six of the nine levels and was gratified that they were substantially different from one

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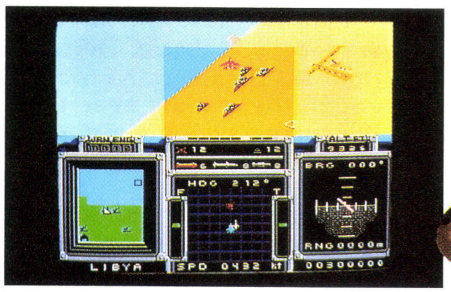

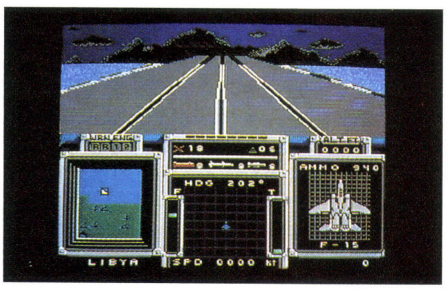

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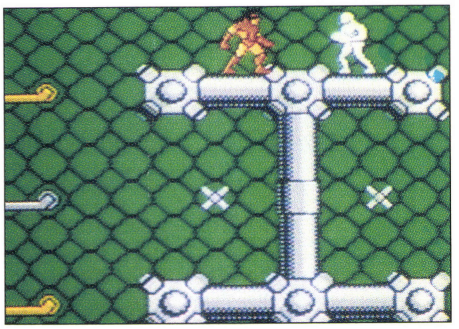
another, with different themes and obstacles to overcome.

The background music and effects are well-done, from the introductory music as the game begins to the mad thumping of Wolverine's heart when in a berserker rage. Screen representations of Wolverine and his enemies are adequate, and the backgrounds are generally okay.

Game play is challenging without being frustrating, and players should be able to advance fairly quickly after memorizing levels and strategies for dealing with Sabertooth's traps. *Wolverine* is a game that most players will enjoy sinking their claws into.

—B. W.



**Overall, *Wolverine* resembles several other games of the same genre, but it's enjoyable nonetheless.**

LJN
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## Silent Debuggers

**NEC**

**For the TurboGrafx-16 ($61.99)**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |

I know, I know—what kind of game is titled *Silent Debuggers*? Is it some kind of crazy exterminator game? Perhaps an exciting twist to debugging computer code? Not quite. Sure, I suppose you are up against what could be termed "bugs," but when they stand six feet tall, have a bellowing roar and can blast holes through your armor, yelling, "Raid!" isn't going to help much.

I found this game somewhat different in that I didn't find out what the storyline behind all the action was until the game was completed. Rather than give away the true nature of your mission and what you are pitted against, I'll just fill in the basic info as I see it.

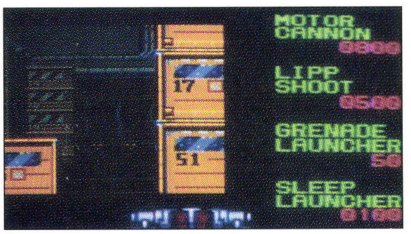
As a member of a two-person team that is collectively known as "Debuggers," your job is to go where there is a need for the removal of aliens. The Debuggers are mercenary types who are experts in battle, having gained their experience in a recent war. In this mission, a space cargo station is shut down and has apparently been overrun by some kind of monsters.

While cleaning out these monsters from the station is the main objective, the incentive for the job comes from rumors that there is great wealth within the bowels of the station—it's just a matter of reaching it.

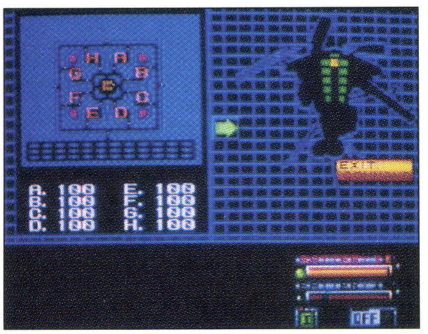
Your other team member is your "pal" Leon, a computer whiz who handles operations from the station's control center. Your job (you lucky stiff) is to creep around through the passageways and cargo areas of the station doing the dirty work of cleaning out the monsters one by one.

The game options consist of either normal or hard skill levels, and only a one-player mode is available. The viewpoint is from a 3-D perspective. As you travel through the station, everything looks as if you are traveling down a hallway; doors and entrances get larger as you approach them.

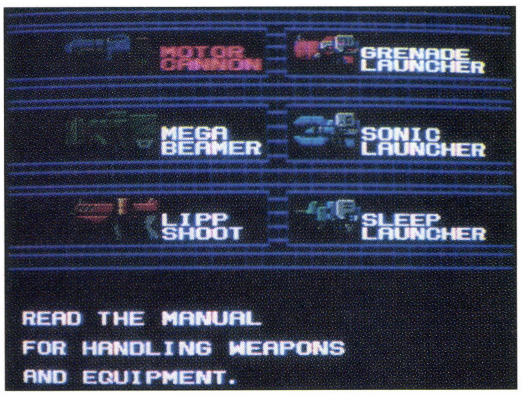
Your equipment consists of an overhead map, two of six different weapons at any one time, two battery packs for your weapon and/or shields, sensors that detect monsters and other possible goodies that Leon will offer you.




If it sounds simple enough to just run and blast through a mazelike structure of hallways and doors, think again. These guys don't sit around waiting to be cooked. While they stay predominately in the cargo area, some of the smarter (and tougher) ones will soon venture into the main hallways and even into any of the eight areas of the station that you must guard.

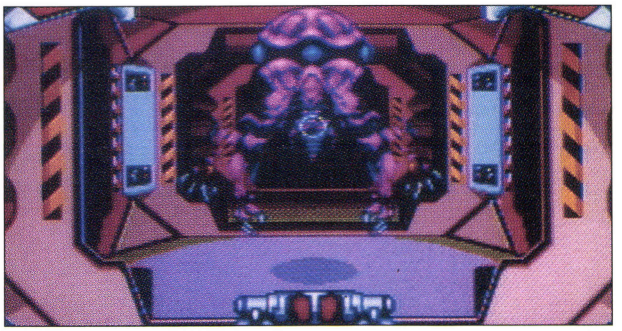


If an alien gets into one of these areas, it will draw power out of it as it feeds on it, and the computer will shut down that area permanently. This is no big deal for some of the areas, as they don't do much for you. However, let them get into the area where your batteries are recharged, your ammo is stored or where the sensors and lighting for the entire station are located, and you can get into deadly trouble mighty quickly.




There are six levels of increasingly difficult passageways and tougher aliens to take care of in order to secure the station. While the majority of the graphics consist of scrolling hallways, the aliens and other backgrounds are done well.

The sound is great, especially in stereo. There is nothing like the feeling of slipping down a hallway as your sensors steadily rise in pitch, and then having one of the aliens jump right out in front of you, blazing and roaring at you. Be prepared to have more than a few sudden encounters when exploring the station.



My only negative comment would be to

say that after making it to the bottom of the station and preparing to blast a boss creature, computer whiz Leon finally gets in on the action and takes matters into his own hands. Otherwise, *Silent Debuggers* is a fairly challenging and intense game, with good action and a good storyline.

—B. W.

NEC Technologies
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## The Bard's Tale: Tales of the Unknown

**FCI**

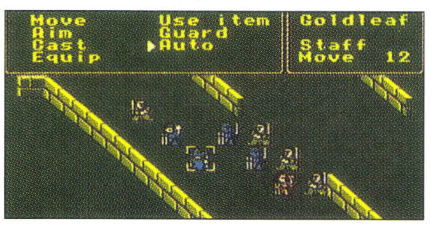
**For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($54.99)**

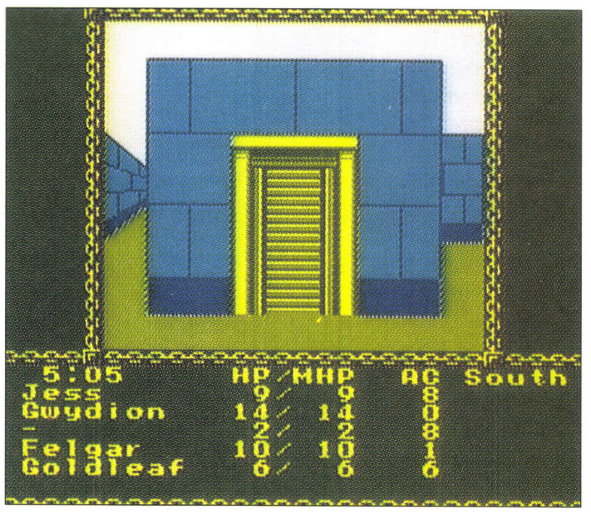
| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | **5** | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | **5** | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **6** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

While many people are used to the hack-and-slash adventures where all you need are a few warriors and perhaps a mage or two, *Bard's Tale* is somewhat different in that a bard is an essential part of your party.

What can bards do? They can swing a blade right alongside your fighters and later play songs that have more than just a catchy tune behind them. These songs may be used to bolster the spirit of the party or even to teleport them.

*Bard's Tale* contains many elements familiar to those who have played any type of RPG on a computer or cartridge system. The first steps include generating characters, naming them, furnishing them with weapons (or musical instruments in the bard's case) and purchasing armor and any other miscellaneous items useful for a quest.






Some of these actions take place within the confines of the "Adventurers Guild," wherein you may create and delete characters, form or disband parties, check the status of individual members, and, most important, save your game. Thank goodness for battery backups!

Weapons, armor and other items may be purchased from weapons shops that are found within a city, or occasionally within chests obtained after battle. Other important "shops" include the shrines where players may have hit or magic points restored or be resurrected if necessary. Equally important is a "review council" where players may take their characters to go up levels or gain spells when the proper amount of experience points have been amassed.

There are six character types to choose from, each with particular strengths and weaknesses, but when they're combined within a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party, they tend to complement one another nicely.

As your party moves about through a town or dungeon area, two views are presented of your movement on-screen. Encompassing most of the left portion of the screen is a 3-D representation showing your forward view. To the right of this display is a smaller overhead view that shows a portion of the area you are in and includes identification of doorways, if not what is behind them. When an encounter takes place or when a shop is entered, both of these disappear and are replaced by a window showing either the monsters you are facing or which shop you have entered. The animation for both views moves quickly, without any slowdown as you move about. Especially useful is the fact that this game is set up so that at any time, one character within the party may choose to battle another member. This feature encourages multiplayer participation as opposed to just one player controlling all characters.

**Tales of the Unknown is somewhat different in that a bard is an essential part of your party.**

I can't offer much in the way of a storyline or a definite goal, as there wasn't any documentation available at review time, and it has been some time since I sat down to the computer version. However, *Bard's Tale* does have quite a bit of territory contained within it to be explored, and it didn't take me long to get pulled into it. There are several cities to explore, with hidden dungeon areas contained within and tough opposition along the way.

The graphics really aren't too great for the most part, especially with so many of the latest games taking advantage of the newer graphics capabilities of the NES. As I have said before, for this type of game, graphics really are somewhat secondary to the game play, which is pretty good. The music and sound effects are in about the same class as the graphics and tend to become old rather quickly—they remind me of the type that was common a few years back in regards to quality.

Adventure game fans that are familiar with the earlier computer versions, or those who can look past the packaging to the truly decent game contained within, will find a challenging adaptation for the NES. Those without the patience for this class of games that shares the company of *Wizardry* and *Ultima* may want to wait for the next *Zelda* clone.

—B. W.

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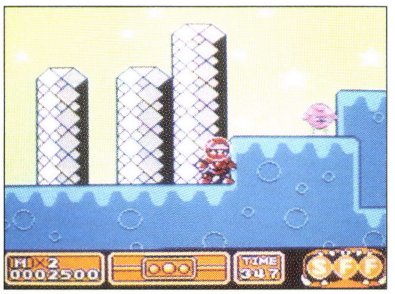

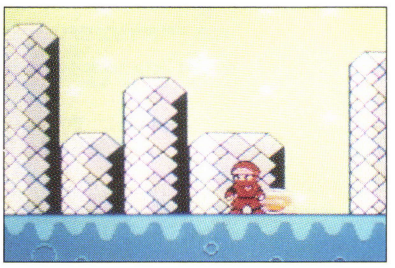

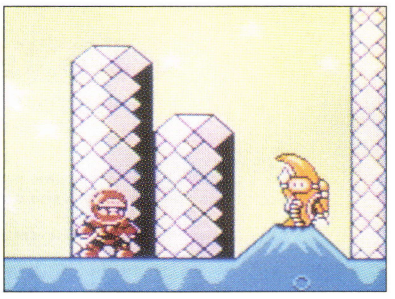

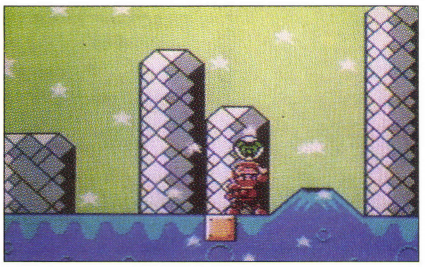

**Squashed, by Jaleco.**

## Squashed

**JALECO**

**For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($45.95)**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **6** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **6** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **6** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Being so popular, the *Super Mario* games were bound to spawn a few clones. *Squashed*, however, is so similar to *Super Mario Bros.* and *Super Mario Bros. 2* that it's downright astounding. I don't think anyone at Jaleco could look you in the eye and deny the source of their inspiration. Even the storyline rings a bell: Two eight-year-old kids, Maru and Cori, are sent to bed without dessert because they refused to eat their vegetables. (Are there actually kids who *do* eat their vegetables?) When they fall asleep, they share a dream about King Kale, the ruler of the Planet of the Grapes. King Kale tells them that the Mutant Squashoids have taken over the planet, and he would like their help in defeating the enemies.

Obviously, if you're a big fan of the Mario boys, you'll love this game. The game play is virtually identical to the *Mario* games, with a couple of minor twists thrown in here and there. Your quest is to make your way through seven worlds, each of which comprises several levels. (Wow. Déjà vu.) You move through the horizontally scrolling scenery, all of which looks amazingly familiar, jumping on enemies and gathering power-ups that give you extra abilities like flying, shooting and indestructibility. The power-ups are usually found by jumping on cubes embedded in the ground or by using your head to bop cubes above you. As you advance, you'll find pipes with secret entrances and surprises like free lives hidden in the sky.

Other power-ups include: the spin cycle jump, which causes your character to spin into nearby enemies; the boomerang bananas and throwing starfruits, which can be fired at approaching meanies; and the darn big frog, which lets you gobble up attackers for free lives. In addition, special letter cubes give you a chance to get a boss-beating beastie who will help you fight the world-end boss. Get three of the same letter, and the boss beastie is yours.

Your character has a selection of special moves that he can call on when the need arises. For example, if you hold down the "B" button, your character will "build up steam," allowing you to run faster and take longer or -

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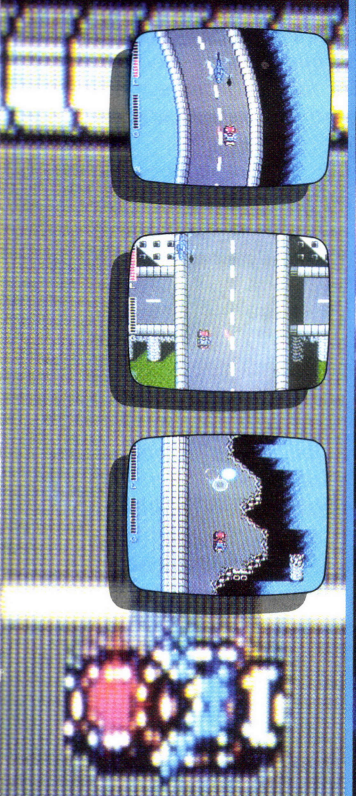

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higher jumps. In addition, he can climb walls and use something called a flying dash attack, which rolls him along the ground like a bowling ball, blasting everything in his path.

Yes, this jumping-and-shooting contest might as well be called *Super Mario Bros. 4*, but that isn't necessarily bad. Jaleco gets no points for originality, of course. Still *Squashed* is entertaining enough. If you just can't get your fill of the Mario Bros., this one belongs plugged into your NES. But don't be surprised if you get the feeling you've been there before.

—C. W.

Jaleco
310 Era Drive
Northbrook, IL 60062
(708) 480-1811

## Champions Forever Boxing

**NEC**

**For the TurboGrafx-16 ($61.99)**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |

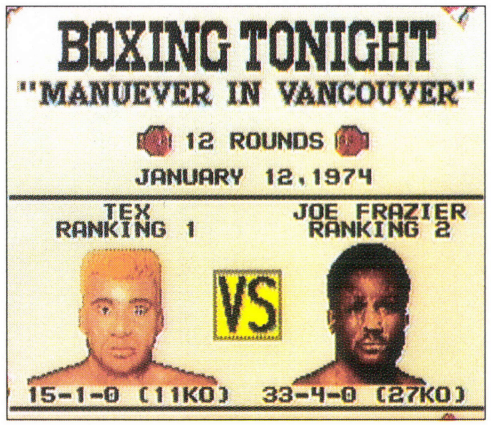
Tired of those cartoon boxing games that put you in the ring against 20-foot giants with supernatural powers? Looking for a *real* boxing challenge—one that requires you to float like a butterfly and sting like a bee? Try *Champions Forever Boxing* and take your best shot at five of the greatest pugilists in the history of the sport, each of them having reigned as the heavyweight champion of the world.

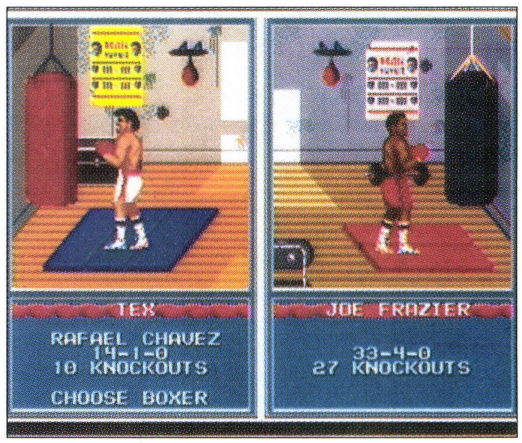
The game opens with cleanly digitized photos of this classic quintet. You'll see a bare-knuckled Muhammad Ali locked in a stare that must have intimidated his opponents for the better part of a decade. Shots of Ken Norton, Larry Holmes and Joe Frazier are equally stunning—each fighter is depicted in his prime, and yet the pictures all look like they were taken within minutes of each other, all under the same lighting conditions. There's even a youthful George Foreman with a full head of hair!

One or two players can participate, and there's also a one-player "career" mode that allows you to compete for the title over the course of a 14-year period, from 1968 to 1982. If you don't want to assume the persona of one of the five champs, there are three generic boxers to choose from, and you can rename any of these eight fighters any way you like.

The first thing you'll notice about *Champions Forever* is the intricacy of the control scheme. There are a lot of different button combinations that are used to maneuver your on-screen surrogate, and you'll have to master them all if you expect to defeat any of the computer-controlled opponents. Blocking is particularly important—if you just jump in and start jabbing away without discretion, you'll tire quickly and leave yourself open to a lot of powerful, accurate punches. This strong emphasis on strategy makes for a fairly realistic boxing simulation, a condition that's partly due to the game's well-rendered graphics and smooth character animation.

**As the first TurboGrafx-16 boxing game, *Champions Forever* proves to be worth the wait.**




My only real complaint is one that applies to a lot of other games for all of the game systems. In the city where I live, *Champions Forever* could cost as much as $67 when state and local sales tax are included. Make no mistake, I'm *not* saying that the game isn't worth that much money—on the contrary, this is a fine product that deserves a place in your collection. But it still hurts when a game retails for more than half of the price of the machine it's played on.

As the first TurboGrafx-16 boxing game, *Champions Forever* proves to be well worth the wait. It's not a first-round knockout, but compared to boxing games on other systems, it's definitely a contender.

—Chris Bieniek

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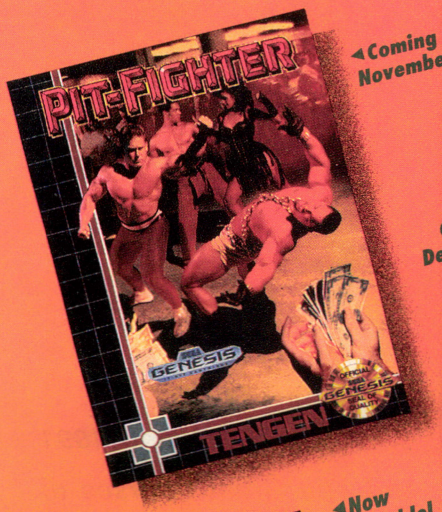


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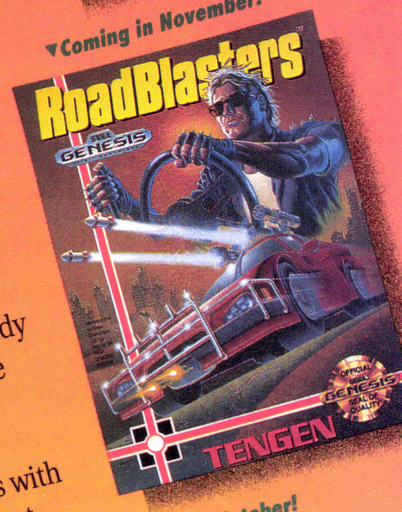


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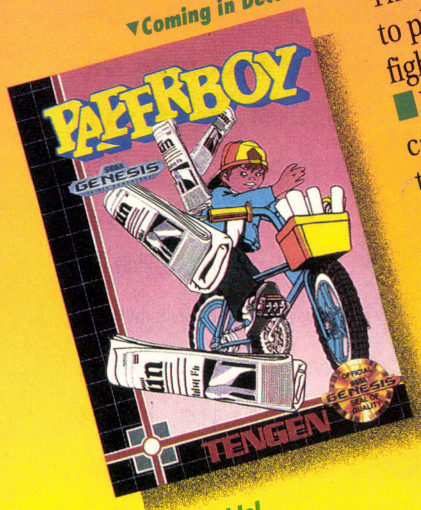


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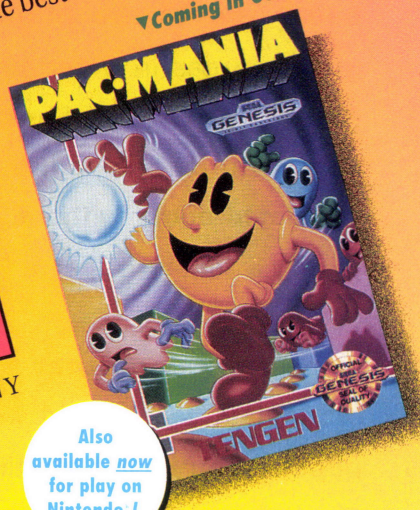


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CIRCLE #126 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

# THE PLAYER'S GUIDE TO ELECTRONIC GOLF

BY BILL "9 IRON" KUNKEL

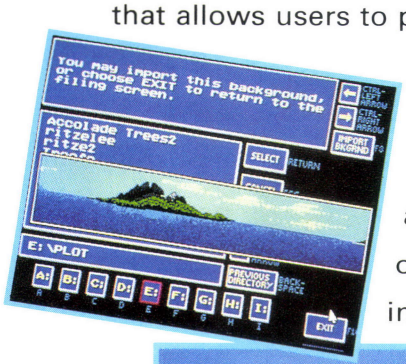
"Fore!" My goodness, it's getting crowded here at the Computer Country Club. In the past year (see "Computer Country Club," June 1990, VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, for a detailed look at earlier electronic links competitions), golfing simulations have been one of the major growth areas in entertainment software. These days, you can't swing a simulated putter without giving a fellow duffer a concussion.

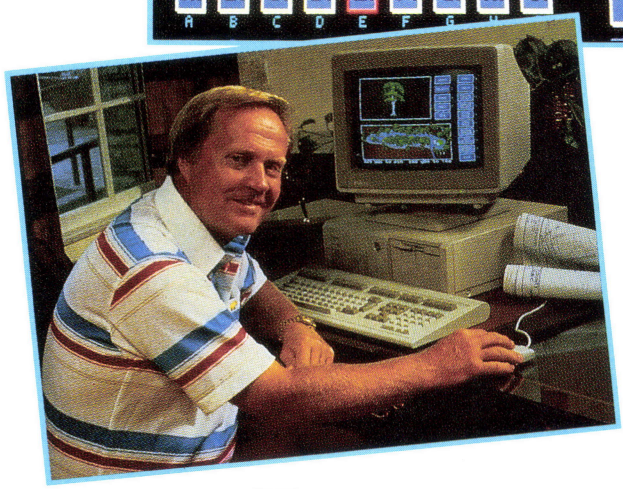
In the computer arena, last year's most popular entry, Ned Martin and Sculptured Software's *Jack Nicklaus' Greatest 18 Holes of Major Championship Golf* (Accolade) is now supported by several course disks, including; *The Major Courses of 1989*, *The International Course Disk*, *The Major Championship Courses of 1990* and *1991* and *The Great Courses of the U.S. Open*. These disks offer a broad spectrum of courses, some of which include Kemper Lakes, Shoal Creek and Baltusrol, just to name a few.

Additionally, Accolade and the creators of *Jack Nicklaus' Greatest 18 Holes* brought us a new game: *Jack Nicklaus' Unlimited Golf & Course Design*. A dream construction kit for computer duffers, *Unlimited Golf & Course Design* is certainly the most elaborate, yet user-friendly, roll-your-own golf course program ever produced. Gamers begin the design process by first

**Above (left and right): *Jack Nicklaus Presents the Major Courses of 1990* and *The International Course Disk*. Left: *Jack Nicklaus Presents the Major Championship Courses of 1991*.**

"routing," or creating a rough layout for the entire course, then placing individual touches on each of the 18 holes. Trees, bushes, water, rocks and even houses can be positioned to exact user specifications; there's even a drawing program that allows users to produce their own objects. Finally, the user moves to the paint program, which allows the user the option of "climatizing" their course with





**Top and second from the top: *Jack Nicklaus' Course Designers Clip Art, Volume I*, is the first of several planned clip art disks. Above and right: *Jack Nicklaus' Unlimited Golf & Course Design.***

## Non-Gaming Golf Programs

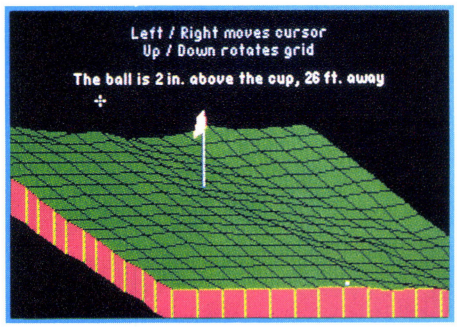
Not all links-related software deals with simulation of the game itself. *Personal Pro—Interactive Golf Instruction* from MicroLeague Sports, for example, is an interactive instructional program designed to help the average golfer improve his or her game. A swing consultant analyzes, diagnoses and corrects problem areas; animated diagrams pinpoint physical game flaws; an experience profile records the user's personal golfing history; the interactive analyzer feature adapts the program as the user's game improves; and checklists are to help the user improve on golfing difficulties using a problem/solution checkoff system.

In the future, MicroLeague promises additional disks that will even allow players to calculate their handicap.

Meanwhile, fans of professional golf and pro golfers will want to check out SGA's *Fantasy Golf*. The SGA (Statistical Golf Association) is a national network of golf enthusiasts whose founders developed a software program that enables members to create their own league, comprising up to 12 ten-golfer teams. The system works much like the fantasy baseball-football programs in which manager-owners "draft" pro players and are awarded points based on their real-world performance.

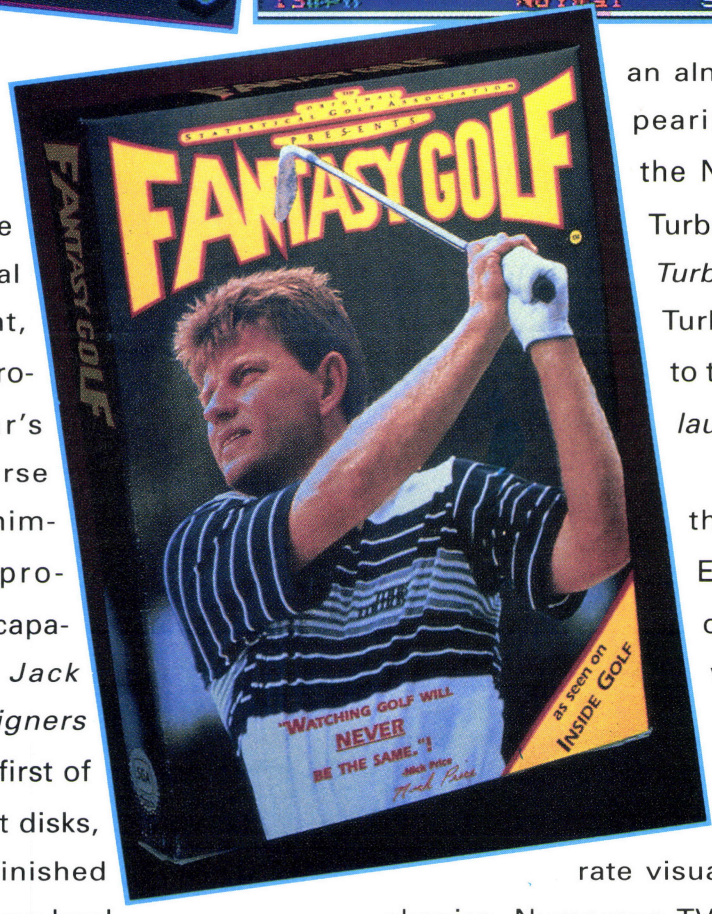
Every Monday, *Fantasy Golf* team owners fill in the results of the weekly pro tour on their fantasy score card. The software then compiles the stats and computes each team's score and standing.

Because of limited distribution, gamers interested in forming a *Fantasy Golf* league should call SGA directly at (800) 800-4SGA.



***PGA TOUR Golf*, by Electronic Arts, for the Sega Genesis (left), will also be released in Super NES format (right). Bottom: SGA's (Statistical Golf Association) *Fantasy Golf*.**

The original Nicklaus program, meanwhile, *Jack Nicklaus' Greatest 18 Holes of Major Championship Golf*, proved so successful that it has been transferred to the video-game universe on an almost unilateral level, appearing on everything from the NES (from Konami) and TurboGrafx-16 (*Jack Nicklaus Turbo Golf* from Accolade in TurboChip and CD formats) to the Game Boy (*Jack Nicklaus Golf* from Tradewest).

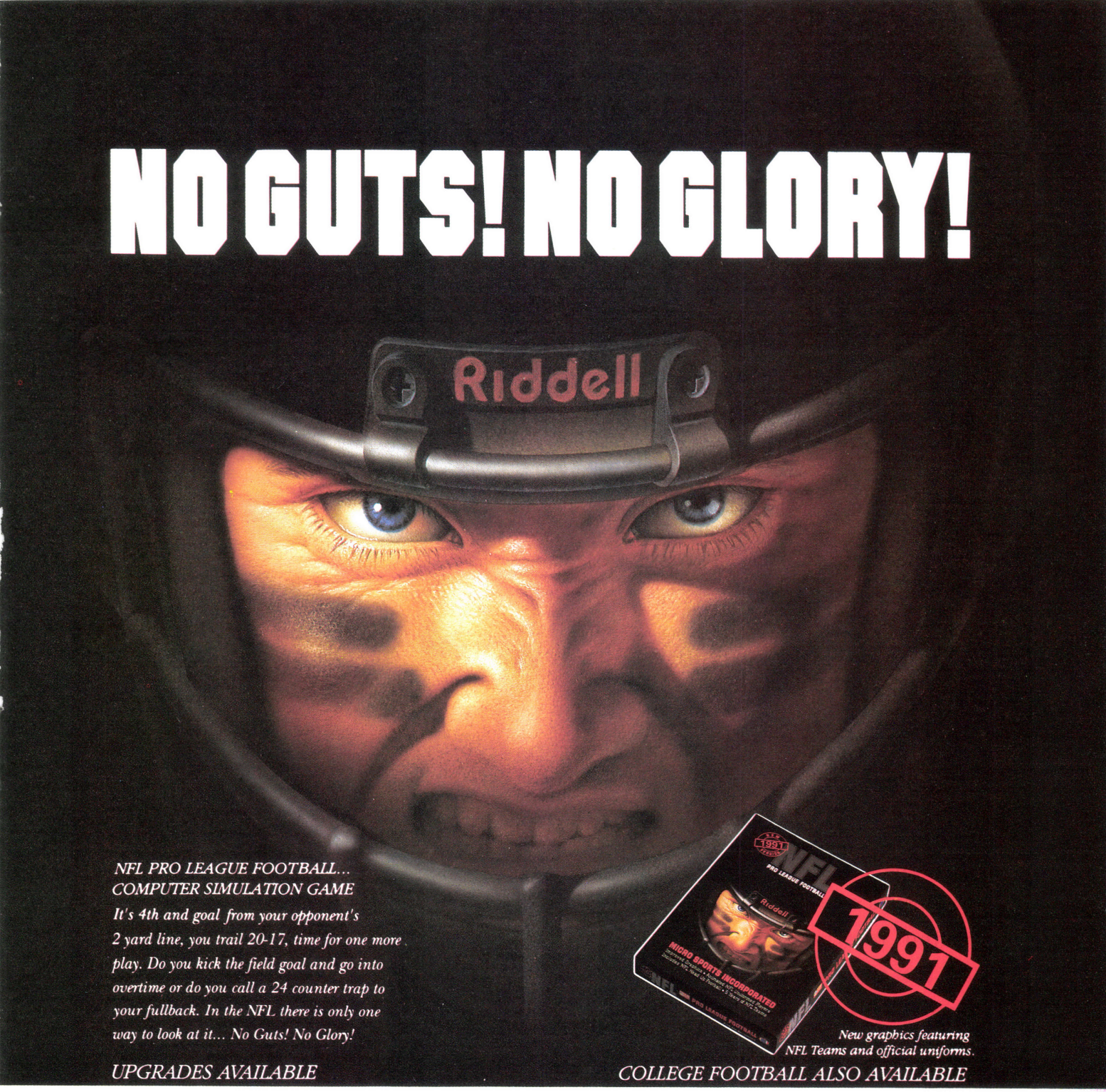



*PGA TOUR Golf*, new this year from publisher Electronic Arts and developer Sterling Silver Software, impressed electronic links mavens everywhere with its deft combination of first-rate visuals and simple play mechanics. Numerous TV-style camera flourishes are featured, including a "tour" of each hole from pin to tee before the gamer tackles it. *PGA TOUR Golf*, like *Jack Nicklaus' Greatest 18*

a choice of desert tones, bright greens or a varicolored autumnal color scheme.

Muirfield Village, the site of Nicklaus' annual Memorial Tournament, is included with the program, as is the Bear's Track, a fictional course created by Nicklaus himself by using this program's course-design capabilities. In addition, *Jack Nicklaus' Course Designers Clip Art, Volume I*, the first of several planned clip art disks, offers users over 70 finished course objects, three new land plots and nine new scenic backgrounds, in addition to a bonus course: Arizona's Desert Highlands Golf Club.

# NO GUTS! NO GLORY!

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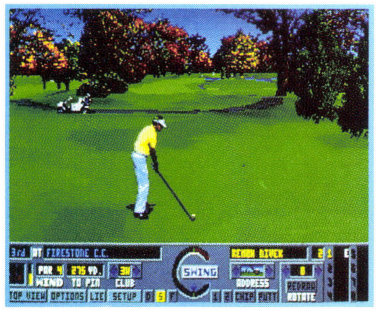
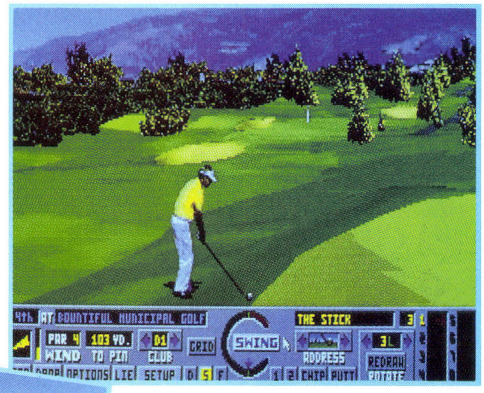
***LINKS The Challenge of Golf*, by Access Software, offers a variety of course disks to choose from, including Bay Hill, Bountiful, Firestone and a just-released fourth disk, Pinehurst.**

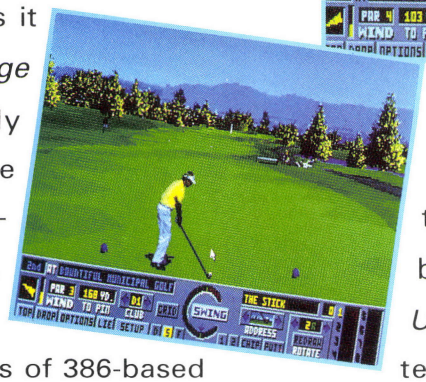
The success of *LINKS* has generated quick follow-up appearances by course disks for Bay Hill, Firestone and Bountiful, a little-known but amazingly beautiful course in Utah, near Access headquarters. Originally chosen for its "*access*ibility," the course turned out so well it was decided to release it as a course disk, while the original program includes the Torrey Pines Golf Course. At press time, *LINKS* and its three course disks all occupied selling positions in the Top 20.

*Holes*, has made the transition from computer to video game with good success, appearing in Genesis format with a Super NES version on the way.

The other major new entry on the computer-golf scene in 1991 has been Access Software's amazing *LINKS The Challenge of Golf*, a 256-color VGA-only PC simulation that stood the gaming world on its collective ear (or is it eye?). *LINKS The Challenge of Golf* combines a fairly sophisticated interface with visuals that totally redefine state of the art. *LINKS* has become one of those games all owners of 386-based VGA PC systems "just have to own," along with *Wing Commander*, *Red Baron* and the latest adventure from Sierra. *LINKS* pushes technology to the max and gives PC owners the chance to show friends and family what their amazing system can really do.







In addition to the computer-to-video-game translations that were already mentioned, two new NES golf simulations will be showing up before the end of the year. *U.S. Open Tournament Golf* will be Nintendo's first golf game since the earliest days of the NES, while Atlus brings the amusingly titled *Super Real Golf Grand Slam* to the 8-bit NES world.

Even the handheld systems have jumped aboard the golfing bandwagon,

*continued on page 66*

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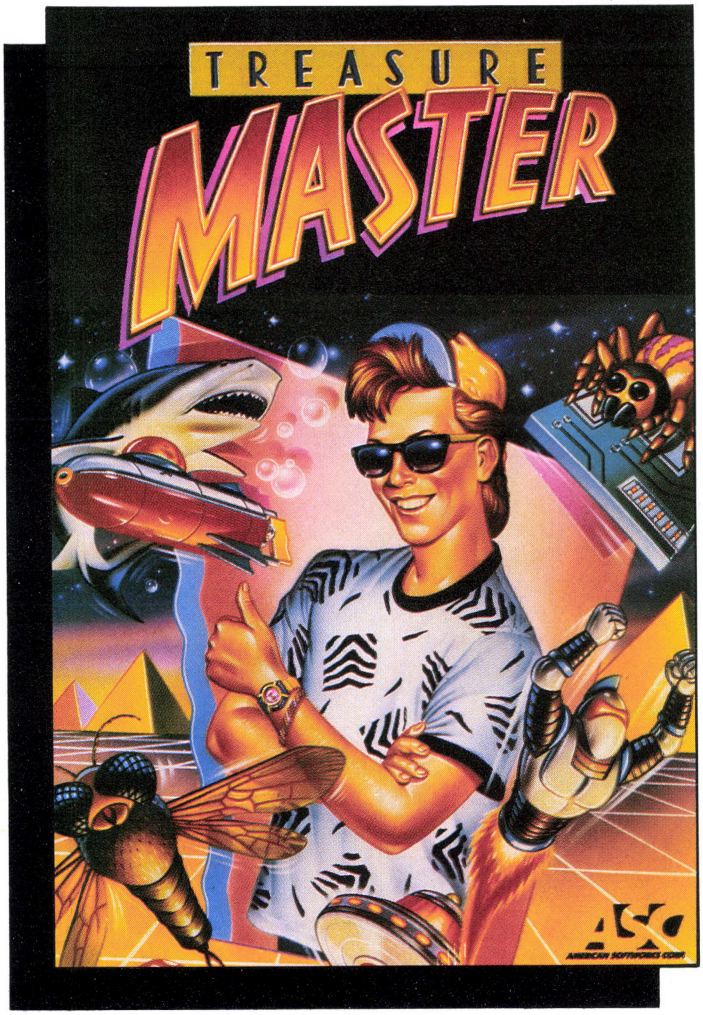


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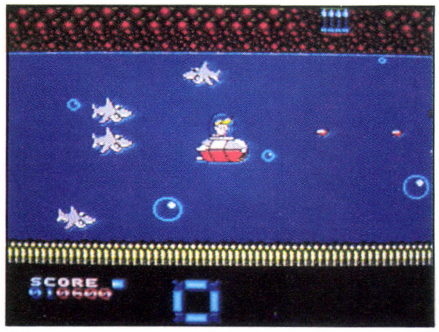
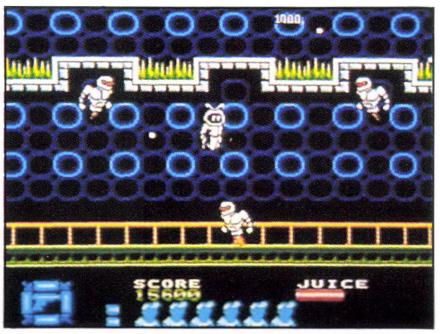



If your oxygen holds out, you're in for a blast.

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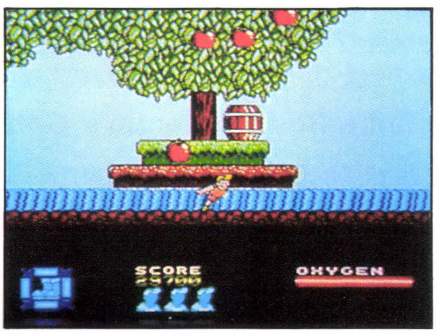


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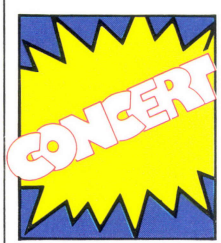


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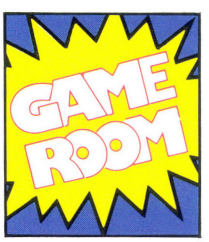


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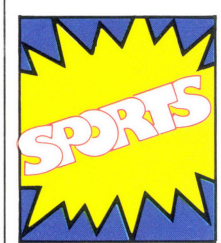


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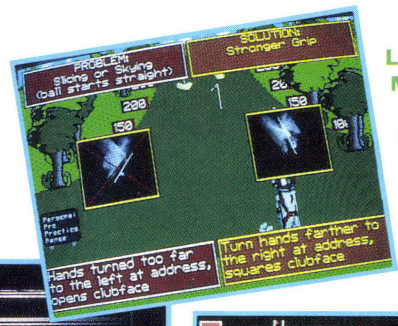
CIRCLE #129 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

*continued from page 62*

where golf simulations are now available for the Game Boy (Nintendo's *Golf* and Tradewest's *Jack Nicklaus Golf*), Game Gear (Sega's *Leader Board Golf*) and Lynx (Atari's *Golf*).

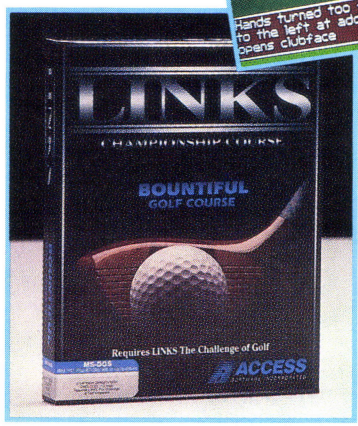
So get in the swing, all you armchair duffers, because electronic golf is clearly happening. Virtually every famous golf course on the planet has been simulated, and design-your-own features now allow game players to let their imaginations run wild. But best of all, you won't need a golf cart to cruise the fairways.




**Left: *Personal Pro*, By MicroLeague Sports.**

**Below left: *LINKS Bountiful Golf Course* disk.**

**Below: *Jack Nicklaus Turbo Golf*.**



# A Survey of the Electronic LINKS

## GOLF SIMULATIONS: COMPUTER GAMES

***Championship Golf: The Great Courses of the World Vol. 1 Pebble Beach*** (GAMESTAR/ACTIVISION) The first serious attempt to simulate a full-course golf game, this dates back to the days of the PC Jr. A superb job by Brian Fargo and Interplay Productions. The behind-the-golfer viewpoint, multiple camera angles and all-purpose interface has been adapted by other designers many times over the years. No further volumes were ever issued.

***World Tour Golf*** (ELECTRONIC ARTS) This solid simulation from Evan and Nicky Robinson and Paul Reiche was the first computer golf simulation to appear on multiple systems, including the C-64. *World Tour Golf* lets the gamer use surrogate golfers modeled on real links champions (Jack Nicklaus becomes "J. Snicklaus"). The game includes 12 courses and a course-construction set.

***Mean 18*** (ACCOLADE) Microsmiths' golf simulation may not be the most visually impressive of its era, but it was one of the most successful. Designed for ease of play, *Mean 18* was voted "Best Simulation" in 1986 by the Software Publishers Association (SPA). Graphics have a simple, almost cartoonish look; the on-screen golfer is seen from above and behind as he hits the ball into the distance.

Pebble Beach and St. Andrews courses were included with the game, along with a make-your-own course construction module. At least six *Mean 18* course disks have been subsequently released.

***Leader Board*** (ACCESS) Bruce and Roger Carver used sophisticated animation techniques in *Leader Board* to capture the interest of electronic duffers. It captured and improved on the realistic look of *World Tour Golf* while offering the simplicity and ease of play offered by *Mean 18*.

***World Class Leader Board*** (ACCESS) This enhanced version of *Leader Board* included Champions-Cypress Creek, Doral Country Club, St. Andrews and the mythical Gauntlet Country Club, as well as a course editor for modifying each one. This was subsequently reissued in PC format with Real Sound.

***Jack Nicklaus' Greatest 18 Holes of Major Championship Golf*** (ACCOLADE) Ned Martin and Sculptured Software, in association with the Golden Bear himself, produced this successor to *Mean 18*. The beautifully rendered courses include St. Andrews, Riviera, Augusta, Baltusrol, Muirfield, Merion, Oakmont, Royal Lytham and the ubiquitous Pebble Beach. One to three human players can compete, or the user can opt to go head to head with one of a quartet of computerized golfers, including one based on Nicklaus himself. Features include wind direction/intensity, hazards, random pin placement (no hole plays the same way twice) and skins scoring/stroke play options. Several course disks are available.

***Jack Nicklaus' Unlimited Golf & Course Design*** (ACCOLADE) This ultimate golf construction set allows users to create any course in the world. The program supports all *Jack Nicklaus'* course disks. The first supplemental disk is already available: *Jack Nicklaus' Course Designers Clip Art, Vol. I.*

***California Pro Golf*** (VIRGIN/MASTERTRONIC) This budget links simulation offers tournament or match play, two courses and club selection.

***Greg Norman's Shark Attack!*** (VIRGIN) Greg Norman hosts this journeyman golfing simulation with putting and driving ranges, variable play levels, matchplay/strokeplay, wind and weather conditions.

***Challenge Golf*** (ON-LINE ENTERTAINMENT) A stylish-looking British entry that offers, among other features, four courses, instant replay, save games, club selection and power/curve controls. Nice-looking 3-D graphics.

***PGA TOUR Golf*** (ELEC-

TRONIC ARTS) For a combination of great visuals and ease of play, this is the golf game of choice, circa 1991. Before each hole, the "camera" pans to the hole and back to the tee, covering the entire distance to give the user a sense of what lies between him or her and the pin.

***LINKS The Challenge of Golf*** (ACCESS) State of the art in terms of its visual presentation. Glorious graphics, unparalleled realism and a good interface. Every inch of every course is mapped in painstaking detail. Available course disks include Bountiful, Bay Hill and Firestone. Torrey Pines is included with the game disk. With Real Sound, but no course-design capability.

***Fantasy Golf*** (SGA) A utility program that allows gamers to set up a fantasy golf league.

***Personal Pro*** (MicroLeague Sports) An interactive golf instruction that's geared to the individual user. Not a game. Designed for the weekend golfer, rather than the pro.

### GOLF SIMULATIONS: VIDEO GAMES

***Golf*** (MAGNAVOX FOR THE ODYSSEY²) One of the earliest golf simulations. Even without scrolling, it offered an entertaining, albeit crude, version of the game.

***GOLF*** (NINTENDO FOR THE NES) Mario stars in this early home version of Nintendo's Vs. Golf coin-op. Choose clubs, stance, swing and the angle of impact.

***Pebble Beach*** (BANDAI FOR THE NES) The most frequently simulated golf course in the world comes to the NES in this multiperspective game. The main window offers the standard perspective, while the top of the screen contains an extremely unusual side view.

***Lee Trevino Fighting Golf*** (SNK FOR THE NES) Despite the title, this is a fairly traditional golf simulation. One unique feature comes after hitting the ball and watching it fly into the distance: The viewpoint quickly switches, and the ball is seen coming toward the player as it lands! Graphics include facial reactions by the on-screen golfer.

***Golf Power*** (VIRGIN FOR THE NES) A solid NES adaptation of the computer game *Greg Norman's Shark Attack!* One of the better NES golf simulations.

***Power Golf*** (NEC FOR TURBOGRAFX-16) The first golf simulation for the TG-16 did a pretty good job of combining behind-the-golfer and top-down views to produce a nice visual effect. Arcade-style golfing.

***Jack Nicklaus Turbo Golf*** (ACCOLADE FOR THE TURBOGRAFX-16) A feature-laden TG-16 version of Accolade's *Jack Nicklaus' Greatest 18 Holes.* Includes tips from the Golden Bear. Available in both TurboChip and CD formats.

***Jack Nicklaus' Greatest 18 Holes of Major Championship Golf*** (KONAMI FOR THE NES) You wouldn't think a game with such an unwieldy title would get around so much, would you? But here it is on the NES. Each hole is different, from the greens at Oakmont to the 14th at St. Andrews. Excellent.

***Arnold Palmer Tournament Golf*** (SEGA FOR THE GENESIS) An excellent Genesis golf game with the visual impact that is lacking in the comparatively drab Genesis version of *PGA TOUR Golf.* Uses standard play mechanics, based around the use of a power/accuracy meter, and a traditional visual presentation.

***PGA TOUR Golf*** (ELECTRONIC ARTS FOR THE GENESIS) An excellent translation of the first-rate computer game by Sterling Silver Software. Virtually all the play and features survived the transfer to cartridge in great shape, with the exception of the color scheme, which seems surprisingly limited for a Genesis game.

***PGA TOUR Golf*** (ELECTRONIC ARTS FOR THE SUPER NES) Play four tournaments in this SNES version of the popular computer and Genesis game: the Player's Championship at Sawgrass; PGA West; the Kemper Open at Avenel; and the Honda Classic at Eagle Trace. Ten top PGA TOUR stars offer tips and suggestions, as in the other versions.

***Top Player's Golf*** (SNK FOR THE NEO•GEO) Visually impressive cartridge is literally the same program as the arcade game of the same title. Split screen mixes behind-the-golfer and top-down perspectives. Not much strategy.

***U.S. Open Tournament Golf*** (NINTENDO FOR THE NES) Brings the old Nintendo golf game up to date. Gamers can put backspin on the ball, get close-up looks at the pin and compete with 35 computerized golfers for a million bucks.

***Super Real Golf Grand Slam*** (ATLUS FOR THE NES) There's interesting visuals in this NES game. The course is seen from a horizontally scrolling top-down view, with windows showing club, stance, shot, lie and position at the bottom of the screen.

### GOLF SIMULATIONS: HANDHELDS

***GOLF*** (NINTENDO FOR THE GAME BOY) A surprisingly playable version of the NES game. Two players can go head to head via the Game Link cable.

***Jack Nicklaus Golf*** (TRADEWEST FOR GAME BOY) The Game Boy version of the outstanding Accolade game.

***Leader Board Golf*** (SEGA FOR THE GAME GEAR) Good-looking adaptation of the old Access game for the Game Gear.

***Golf*** (ATARI FOR THE LYNX) Large character graphics highlight this Lynx golf simulation with club selection, wind effects and swing and stance settings.

### MINIATURE GOLF: COMPUTER GAMES

***Mini-Putt*** (ACCOLADE) Three graphics windows are used to capture the look and feel of miniature (a/k/a putt-putt) golf. The main display consists of a behind-the-ball view, while secondary windows show the golfer and a top-down view of the entire hole.

***Hole-in-One Miniature Golf*** (DIGITEK) Top-down and first-person perspectives are combined in this somewhat dated putt-putt program. The original package includes five course disks with three more supplemental courses available in a single package.

***Will Harvey's Zany Golf*** (ELECTRONIC ARTS) This spectacular simulation offers both a superb rendition of traditional miniature golf as well as more exotic holes made possible through the magic of the computer. The only drawback to this program, which is the finest such simulation ever produced, is the lack of subsequent course disks.

### MINIATURE GOLF: VIDEO GAMES

***Miniature Golf*** (ATARI FOR THE ATARI 2600) Top-down bagatelle-type game is a lot of fun, but not much like miniature golf.

***Zany Golf*** (ELECTRONIC ARTS FOR THE GENESIS) A disappointing translation of the superb computer game. Animation is slow and jerky, while the visuals have a grainy look. Still, even at 75%, it's the best miniature golf simulation available in video-game format.

***Mini Putt*** (JVC FOR THE NES) The NES version of the Accolade disk game *Mini-Putt.*

ILLUSTRATION BY MIKE WEPPLO

# Gaiares

## STRATEGY GUIDE

### PART II

by Donn Nauert

The human race has left the Earth an environmental wasteland, but, like the saying goes, "One man's trash is another man's treasure"—that's the way an intergalactic terrorist group sees it as well. They want to build weapons with the Earth's polluted waste. To aid Earth in its struggle, the United Star Cluster of Leealuth has sent two warriors with a modified spacecraft that carries the TOZ weapon system.

In this issue we'll take a look at the last four stages of *Gaiares*, where you'll try to save Earth and the human race.

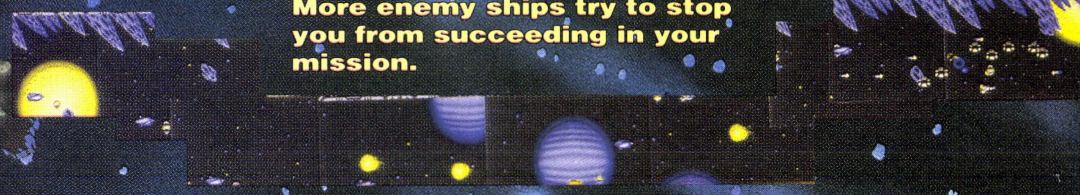
Here's a little help if you can't get through all this. To get invincibility, at the beginning of each stage, press START to pause, then hold A and C and press L. All the action on the screen should stop. This lets you know you've done the trick correctly.

FOR THE GENESIS

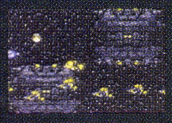
# STAGE 5

In this stage, you'll move up and down repeatedly. As you move up, you'll see stalactites made of ice. Be careful of the pieces that break off and fall. When you move down, you'll reach a lava flow. In this part, large fire balls will appear from the lava and break into pieces as they near you. Enemy ships will also be present as you go. Simply shoot everything in sight.

More enemy ships try to stop you from succeeding in your mission.



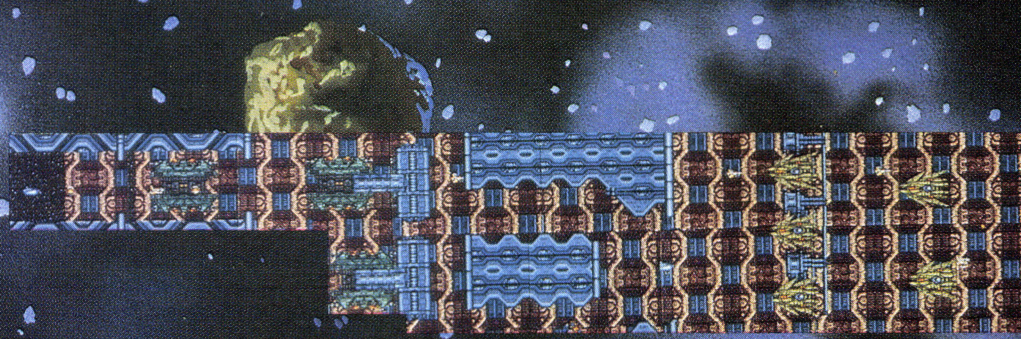
# STAGE 6



This stage will start off with you battling a swarm of despiders.

After the first few waves, these large moving tunnels will approach you from the left side of the screen. Maneuver your way through the middle of them as you take on a steady flow of despiders.

You'll now enter a deadly chamber filled with the game's largest enemies and mini-bosses. If you use the Giga-Beam or T-Braster, you can take out the enemies, but the biggest problem is maneuvering your ship through the narrow openings without hitting the walls. Though the map shows quite a few enemies coming at you at once, normally only two bosses will appear at one time.



First up is the Gilbase...

This guy should look familiar. Try to obtain the Giga-Beam from it.

This is the last major obstacle before the end boss.

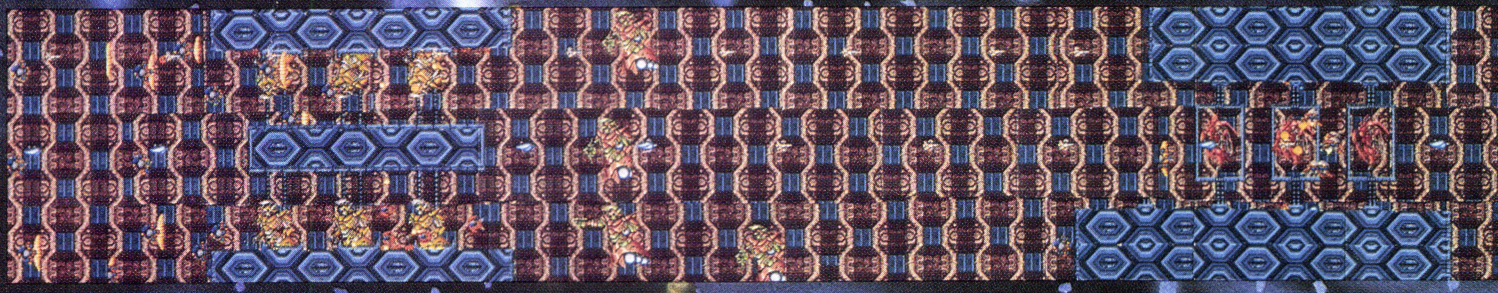
# STAGE 5
## END BOSS

Initially, this dragon has four types of weapons it will use. The only one you really have to worry about is the fire ball. It'll track you for a few seconds, then disappear off the screen. Dodge until it disappears, or use your TOZ (since it's invincible) to destroy it. Your target on the dragon is right above the front or left arm, but you'll have to wait until the dragon lowers it in order to hit it. Once you destroy the arm, the dragon will shoot waves of fire at you. The waves are easy to avoid, and your target is still the chest area.

...followed by a slew of refredlys.

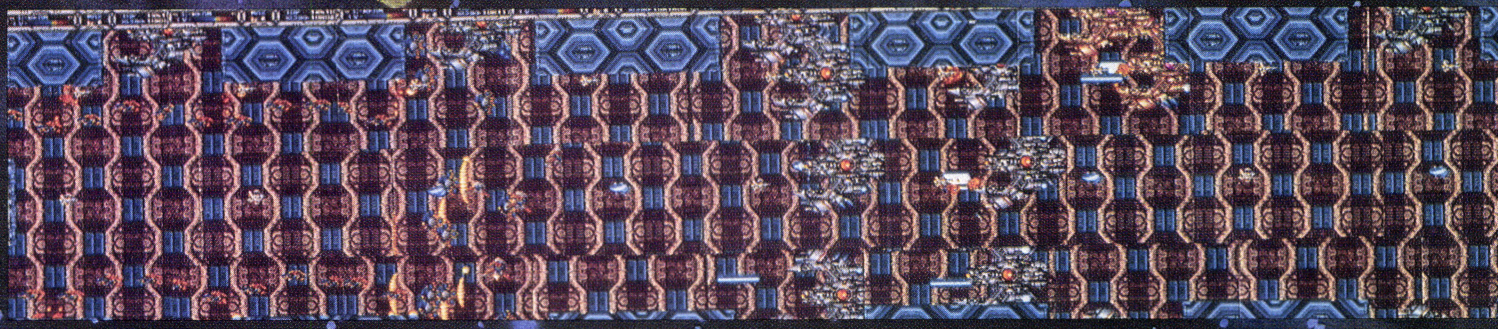
Now a couple of volkens get into the action...

...and these anonymous red guys put their two cents' worth in.



Don't think you'll find only mini-bosses—there'll be plenty of regular enemies to keep you busy. Look for a shield at the top of this section also.

Finally, this guy will appear. When you reach him, you'll know you're almost through the stage.



# STAGE 7

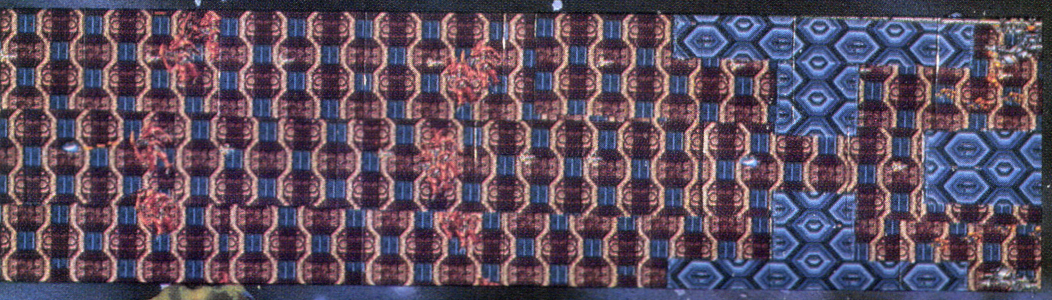
This stage is made up of all the end bosses from Stages 1 to 6, with a few other enemies thrown in for good measure. In case you missed Part 1 of the strategy, here's how to defeat Bosses 1 through 4:
The Stage 1 boss, Galudia, will fire a three-directional shot and, when she puts her hands together, an energy blast. The shots are easily avoided, and you'll need to move up and down to avoid the blast.

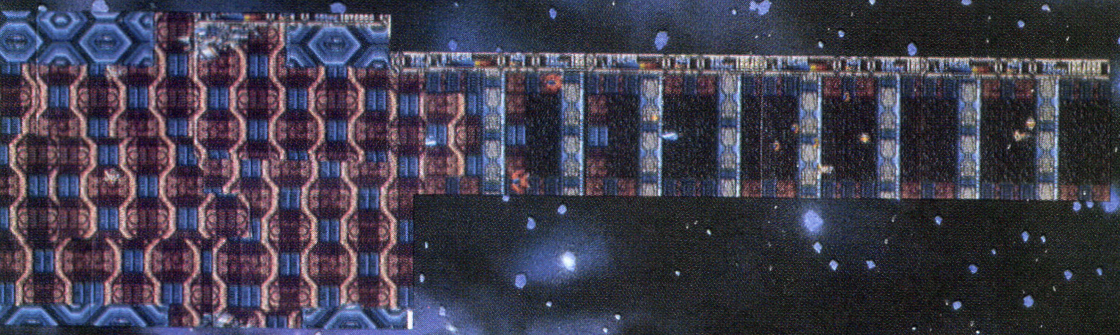
Demarina, the Stage 2 end boss, will initially appear as a clam. You'll need to shoot the opening in front while avoiding the laser shots. Once she actually appears, she'll fire one small shot at you, then fire shock waves straight ahead. You can move up or down to avoid the small shot, but make sure you leave yourself plenty of room to get out of the way of the shock wave.

Death Ghetto will first materialize on the left side of the screen. Unless you have a homing missile-type weapon, you won't be able to do much at this point except dodge the rotating blades. After Death Ghetto sends three blades at you, he may move to the right side of the screen. He won't hurt you as he moves from side to side, but be ready for him to appear on the left side again. If he appears on the right side of the screen, blast him in the head with whatever you have. The first two blades will travel straight, but the last one will follow you. If you move in a counterclockwise pattern, you should be able to avoid it.

# STAGE 6

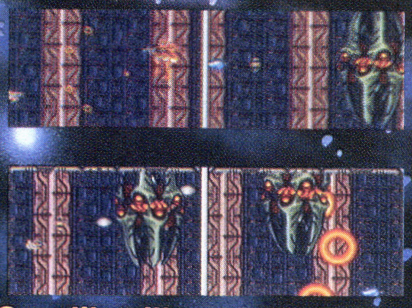
## END BOSS



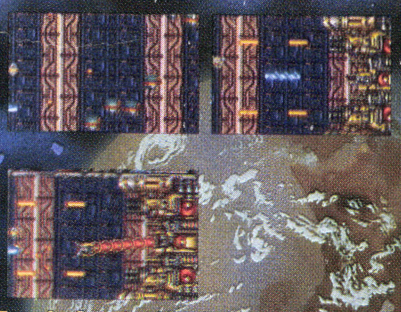


This character will hide behind his shield. His problem is that the shield is also his weak spot. When he's not shooting one of his weapons at you, pump as many shots as you can into the center of his shield. When his sword comes down, that's when you'll do damage. Avoid the energy blast by moving in circles, and use the TOZ to destroy it.

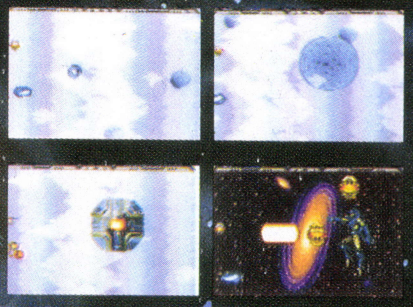
# STAGE 8



Guzalik will appear on the right side of the screen and begin to fire pulse shots at you, which can be easily avoided. It'll then move around the screen in a counterclockwise motion. Try to stay ahead of it as you also move counter-clockwise. When Guzalik stops, it'll fire large rings counterclockwise as well. There is an opening in the pattern at about 3:30 on the screen. Try to get to that position before it starts firing. To destroy Guzalik, you'll have to fire shots into the center.



To defeat the last boss of Stage 7, position yourself just above the center on the left side of the screen, and fire into the center of the machine. Watch for the claw that will shoot out, and as it does, move down to just below center. As it retracts it'll fire some shots at you, but if the TOZ is above you, it will absorb them instead. Now you can either move back up to the same position and repeat the process, or stay where you are, and move up as the claw comes at you again.



This is a very short stage. Only one enemy appears, but it shows up in three forms. First it'll appear as a large moon that fires asteroids at you, then as a gunship. Finally, it will appear in its true form. To defeat it simply fire away with whatever weapon you have. She will shoot a spread of single shots as well as large blast (if you have the Giga-Beam) that are easy to avoid. The large TOZ that she has will not harm you, so don't be intimidated by it.

# Spine-

by Bill "The Crypt Keeper" Kunkel

ILLUSTRATION BY JIM MCDERMOTT

# Tinglers

Welcome, mavens of the macabre, to VG&CE's third-annual survey of the new horror-oriented electronic entertainments. Playing host on such a gory tour is a grave responsibility, but anything is preferable to seeing our dear readers buried under a moldy mound of mysterious new releases. So toss another log on the fireplace, fear fans, knock back a serious slug of hot chocolate and we're off on a tour of the world's most spine-tingling software, circa 1991!

## Movie Monsters

As usual, most of the game-generated characters who will evoke chills and shudders on our monitors and TVs were originally spawned on the silver scream, err, screen. Films such as *Darkman*, *Arachnophobia*, *Predator 2*, *The Terminator* and several others are making the transition from cinema to silicon this year.

The terminator, that loveable killer cyborg from a future in which the remnants of humanity are ruthlessly hunted down and expunged, promised us he'd be back. He kept his word, returning in comic books, a big-budget movie sequel (see below) and now, a major new computer title from Bethesda Software. *The Terminator* casts the gamer as Kyle Reese, urban commando from the year 2029, who has been sent back in time in order to protect Sarah Connor, the woman who will someday give birth to mankind's future savior.

**The Terminator, by Bethesda Software, uses a more realistic first-person presentation, than the tried-and-true side-scrolling formula.**

Rather than rely on the tried-and-true formula of placing the player-character in a side-scrolling universe bristling with terminators, booby traps and power-ups, Bethesda opted for a more realistic, first-person presentation. Kyle moves about a computer simulation of Los Angeles complete with cars, stores and dance clubs.

The player also has the fascinating option of playing the game as the terminator, with its objective being the elimination of both Kyle and Sarah.

Gamers who prefer the more traditional, side-scrolling approach to licensed video games, however, will want to check out Virgin Games' *Terminator* game for the Sega Genesis. This version embraces the traditional virtues of good graphics and ease of play.

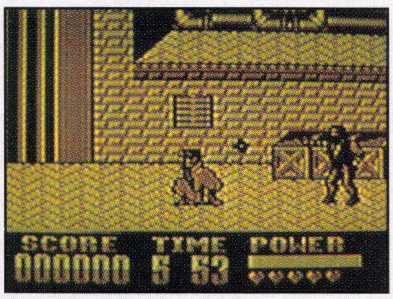
And while we're on the subject of Arnold Schwarzenegger's famous cinematic creation, perhaps the most eagerly anticipated of this year's movies-to-microcircuits monsters is Bally/Williams' coin-op version of *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*. The game was produced in close cooperation with the filmmakers, who supplied the arcade giant with advance access to everything from scripts to actual footage. For the first time since Disney Studios gave us *Tron* while Bally simultaneously produced a coin-op based on the film, moviemakers and game makers worked hand in glove to get maximum output from the film's incredibly expensive budget (*Terminator 2* is reported to have cost well over $100 million to produce).

Today's movie special effects carry increasingly more astronomical price tags, so it's only natural that movie studios want to optimize potential profit streams by steering their property into as many viable licensing avenues as possible. Cable, video, comic books and T-shirts have all proven to be compatible mediums for licensed movie characters, but the ever-expanding technological capabilities of interactive entertainment make the marriage of movies and electronic games perhaps the best match of all. Digitized sound and graphics, along with the burgeoning CD-ROM and CD-I technology, will allow state-of-the-art video, computer and coin-op games to duplicate entire scenes from favorite films while adding the benefits of interactivity.

## Feature Film Nightmares

Other film fiends who are making the flight from silver screen to CRT include last year's surprise hit *Darkman*, the story of a brilliant scientist whose face and hands are destroyed by gangsters

but who uses ray-tracing, holograms and advanced computer technology to create perfect, masklike replicas of anyone. With these flesh-like masks covering his ruined face, he masquerades as his enemies and walks among them, taking his revenge as he goes. The chameleon aspect of *Darkman*'s story works perfectly in the side-scrolling adaptation from Ocean for the NES and Game Boy, as does his achilles heel: the masks decompose in less than an hour!




***Darkman*, for the NES and Game Boy, is a side-scrolling-style adaptation of the movie.**

Ocean will also be publishing NES and Game Boy titles based on Paramount's upcoming cinematic treatment of "The Addams Family." Based on the Charles Addams cartoons, which appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post* for years, and the TV show from the '60s, the game brings back all the members of that "mysterious and spooky" family, including Gomez, Morticia, Pugsley, Uncle Fester and Lurch—the faithful butler. Addams Family fanatics can also look forward to a very special Christmas present: a CD-format game from NEC for the TurboGrafx-16 starring our favorite nuclear family!

While they were licensing every horror title that slithered in their direction, Ocean also announced PC and Amiga versions of *Nightbreed*, based on the commercially unsuccessful but interesting film by British scream-writer Clive Barker, best known for the *Books of Blood* series and the *Hellraiser* films. *Nightbreed* is the story of Median, a subterranean city long hidden from the eyes of mankind, which is home to a race of beings known as the "Nightbreed" or simply "the Breed." Boone is a member of the Breed who was unaware of his exotic heritage and, in fact, passed for human until the onset of maturity. Then his developing powers and some strange circumstances revealed his nonhuman nature. Boone's arcade-style journey into the depths of Median comprises the main element of this interesting adaptation.

**Available on home computer systems, *Nightbreed* focuses on the main character's journey into Median.**

## Gremlins in Your Game Boy!

Only gamers with extremely sharp memories will recall the first video-game treatment of the stylish Joe Dante film, *Gremlins*. That's because this long-forgotten classic was designed by Atari for its ill-fated 7800 system, and the game was barely in release before the "Age of Atari" ended. The game was similar to Brøderbund's innovative and delightful *Spare Parts*, a task-performance classic in which gamers had to keep an arcade operating while under siege from weird creatures called Zerks. In *Gremlins*, the idea was to keep Gizmo and his mogwai friends from eating after midnight or coming into contact with water—the two things that transform cuddly mogwais into the leathery little monsters known as gremlins.

*Gremlins 2: The New Batch*, based on the sequel, comes to the Game Boy from Sunsoft. It's a side-scroller in which the gamer controls Gizmo on his quest to defeat his malevolent cousins. They have broken into a genetics laboratory and transformed themselves into more different types of gremlin than Howard Johnsons has flavors of ice cream! There are gremlins with huge, batlike wings; articulate gremlins; and even a monstrous gremlin-spider! Is little Gizmo up to the challenge? Well, he *has* been watching a lot of Sly Stallone movies lately....

## Let All Prey

The original *Predator* visited the computer universe courtesy of Activision, but the sequel, the oh-so-cleverly titled *Predator 2*, will stalk computer-software outlets wearing the Konami imprimatur.

In this contest, the player is cast as Detective Mike Harrigan, the role played by Danny Glover in the film. It's been ten years since a group of mercenaries encountered a big-game-hunting alien in the jungles of Central America. Now another member of that race is back on Earth, in Los Angeles of all places, and anyone with a weapon—cops, drug lords and even self-defense-minded citizens—is fair game.

As in the original, the Predator is well armed, equipped with a laser-guided rifle, body armor and total camouflage capability that allows it to instantly disappear into the surrounding environment. The game begins with Harrigan's arrest of a drug lord who has some information about the Predator, and ends, appropriately enough, in a slaughterhouse. This multilevel action game will be available for PC, Amiga and C-64 systems by this fall.

## And Along Came A Spider

One of this year's best-executed movie-to-game adaptations is Disney Software's *Arachnophobia*. This computer contest is, of course, based on the hit movie in which a small California town is invaded by killer spiders. The player is cast as the brave exterminator who must travel from house to house, using a variety of high tech antiarachnid devices to exterminate the spiders and, most important, their nests. Combining a top-down and multilevel side perspective, *Arachnophobia* is not only extremely playable, it is actually *scary*! When the player-character encounters the fierce South American spider, for example, and the aggressive little monster attacks him, the gamer's heart may very well skip a beat.

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The hit Taito arcade game is now available exclusively for the TurboGrafx™-16!

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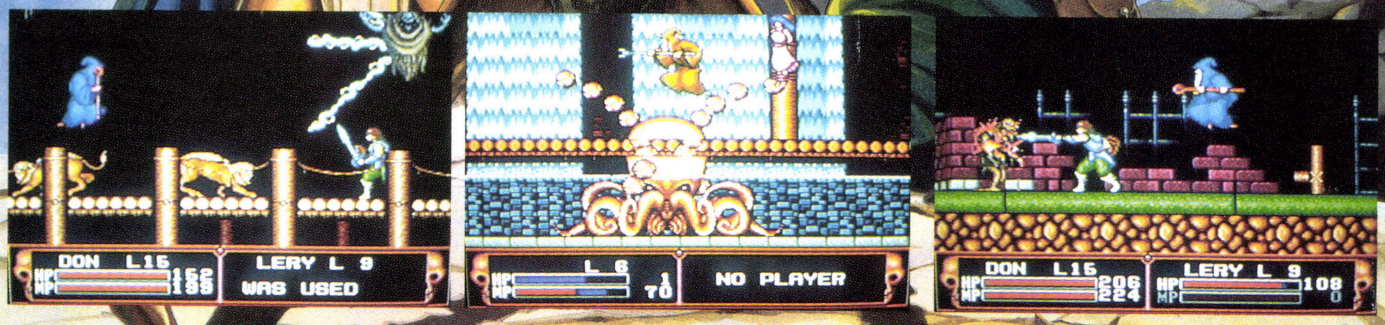
WORKING DESIGNS

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**Arachnophobia represents Disney's first for-all-ages game release based on a major film property.**

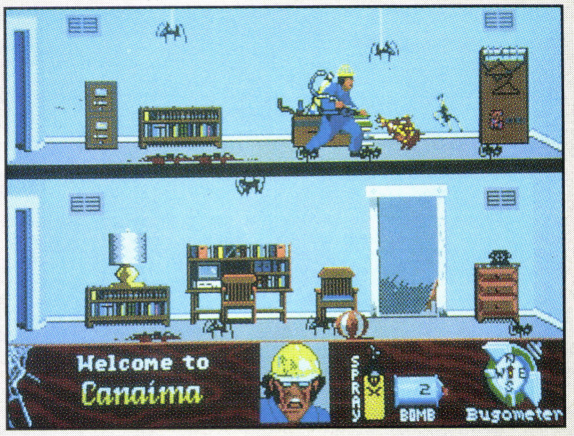
Definitely not a game for real-life spider-haters, *Arachnophobia* does a marvelous job of both capturing a movie's thrills and chills and transporting that ambiance to the game arena.

## Sequelmania

Several nonmovie spooky sequels will also be rearing their ugly heads this year. And the ugliest heads of all may well belong to a 60-foot tall, three-headed, dogfaced demon named Cerberus, the primary antagonist in Horror Soft's *Elvira II: The Jaws of Cerberus,* which will be published in this country by Accolade. The follow-up to last year's *Elvira, Mistress of the Dark,* this dark fantasy adventure begins at the front gates of Black Widow Productions, movie studio and home to everyone's favorite slinky, sexy, spook-show hostess. But what's this? The studio is abandoned. No director, no crew—no Elvira! Suddenly, the black-garbed beauty appears as a ghostly image and informs the player that she has been captured by an evil entity and is being held prisoner in one of the studio's three sound stages. But before she can spell out her location, Elvira's image disappears and is replaced by a book of magical incantations and a trio of doorways leading to the three sound stages. One is the set for a Victorian mansion, another a labyrinth housing a huge spider web (spiders again!) and the third is a massive, fog-laden cemetery.

This PC adventure, scheduled for fall release, features 256-color VGA graphics and a refined version of the interface that was used in the original Elvira adventure.

More spooky sequels shambling in our direction include *Super Ghouls and Ghosts,* from Capcom, for the Super NES. Based on the extremely popular coin-op, *Ghouls and Ghosts,* this souped-up sequel offers graphics and animation that are actually superior to the Genesis version. Once again, the setting is medieval with the player cast as Sir Arthur, battling the horrible hoards of "the Prince of Darkness" in a side-scrolling quest to rescue a kidnapped Princess.



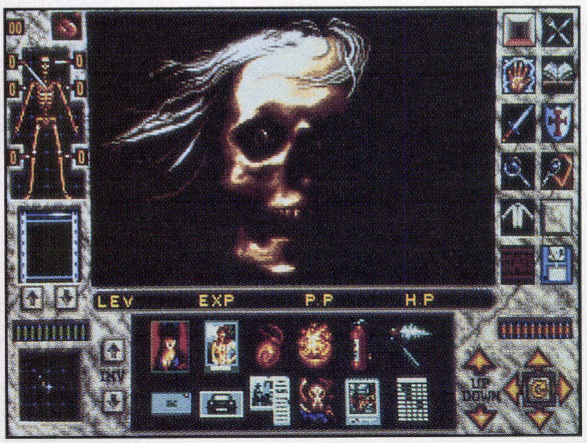

Fans of big monsters won't have a lot of new offerings to chew on this year, but *Godzilla 2: War of the Monsters* is stomping its way to NES game shelves from Toho Co., Ltd. Instead of producing a simple side-scrolling contest like the original, this follow-up offers gamers a much higher strategy component, including a pop-up command menu and map screens, in addition to the animated battle sequences. The player takes the role of the commander of the allied forces and must position troops and weapons on the map, then give the order to attack. Good news: some of the monsters are on your side.

Finally, would any section on scary sequels be complete without news of the latest Castlevania incarnations? Of course not. *Castlevania II—Belmont's Revenge* is on its way to the Game Boy in all its side-scrolling glory. Players must maneuver their surrogates through a series of creepy castles, including the Plant Castle, Crystal Castle, Rock Castle, Cloud Castle, secret bonus rooms and even a secret castle. Meanwhile, the series breaks new ground with *Castlevania IV* for the Super NES. This time out, the player-character is equipped with one heck of a whip to help him whip through the 11 spooky stages. The graphics reflect the enhanced capabilities of the 16-bit Nintendo system, as does the stereo sound and double-scrolling. In this newest wrinkle on the saga of the haunted Belmont family, Dracula himself is back to make their lives miserable. *Castlevania II* for the Game Boy is due this fall, while *Castlevania IV* is scheduled for release around Christmas.

## New and Horrible

Some of the original horrors slated for release through the remainder of this year include a pair of terrifying titles from AGCI, one of the NES publishers not licensed by Nintendo.

*Death Race,* originally developed as an Exidy arcade game by James Ferguson, puts the player in the cockpit of a heavily armed, futuristic vehicle in a cross-country race against an army of gremlins. The gruesome gremlins, meanwhile, are equipped with their own vehicles, not to mention nuclear missiles and the silos from which to fire them. *Chiller,* developed by Christopher Erhardt and Uncle Otto's for Exidy's coin-op line, offers two-player simultaneous action and multiple levels and is playable with either the Nintendo Light Gun or regular NES controllers. Set in



***Elvira II: Jaws of Cerberus*, by Accolade.**

# Now, Bill & Ted have two excellent adventures...for NES™ and Game Boy®. *MOST TRIUMPHANT!*

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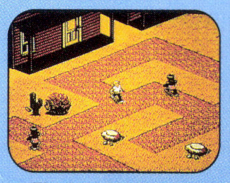
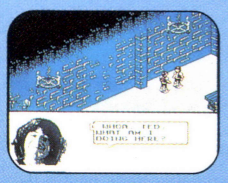
Bill & Ted's Excellent Game Boy® Adventure™ sends our two most excellent compatriots, Bill and Ted, on a "Bogus Journey" against evil versions of themselves and the Grim Reaper as you race against the clock to collect stolen time fragments. Stellar!

Tough choice, dude. But you know what Bill and Ted would do: Choose both!



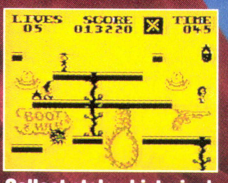
The locals give you clues to the whereabouts of famous historical dudes.



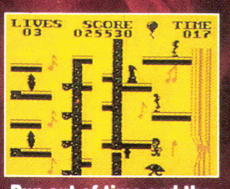
Party on with the Wyld Stallyns – if you complete your noble quest.

Say Ted, isn't that Ted? No way – yes way!

An evil plan to totally destroy your future? Bogus!



Collect stolen historical fragments, like bodacious Billy the Kid's Sheriff Star.



Run out of time and the most heinous Grim Reaper sends you to the land down under.

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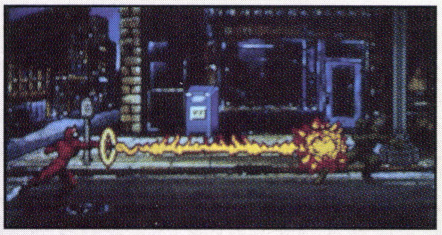
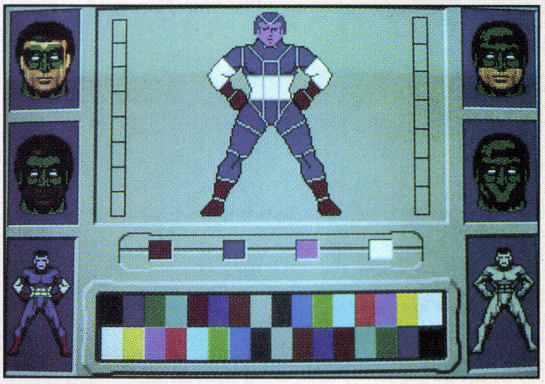
CIRCLE #131 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

the Middle Ages, the game begins with the player-character accidentally overhearing the news that a malign force invaded and occupied a nearby castle and is causing the dead to rise from their graves. Soon an army of zombies gathers to march on the town. With no time to waste, the player must get through the local graveyard, which is literally crawling with the undead, and reach the castle in order to stop this horrible plague.



Speaking of plagues, have you heard about the unauthorized research going on at the Genoq Company? Terrible. The experiment got out of hand, and now the plant has been overrun by a series of degenerative viruses that threaten everyone in the complex! That's the theme behind *Degeneration*, a new adventure for PC systems from Software Toolworks. The player is cast as a mercenary hired to lead a rescue attempt, but it's no milk run. The plant has over 150 rooms filled with a variety of traps and other surprises. The game offers 256-color VGA support and employs an offbeat cutaway perspective with nonlinear travel between rooms and conversation capability.



**Konami's *Champions* is based on the popular nonelectronic board game.**

Perhaps the most unusual new entry in the shudder sweepstakes is Alan Grant's *Demoniak* from Palace Software for the PC and Amiga. Grant, best known as the author of the long-running British "Judge Dredd" comic book series, employs a new development system called "Pure Fiction," which allows the user to play any of the game's 50-plus artificially intelligent characters.

And who exactly is *Demoniak*? According to the notes on the back of the box: "Demoniak is Evil Incarnate. Demoniak is claws that rip at innocent eyes—fangs that tear at the throats of angels; Demoniak is the curse that shrieks down the centuries—the scream that cries 'Blood' and blots out the sun...." Boy, don't you just love that kind of talk? In other words, he/she/it is nobody's sweetheart, not to mention being involved in the systematic destruction of entire planets. So, Doctor Cortex assembles a team of superheroes to kick some Demoniak butt. There's Johnny Sirius (idol of mankind), the "voluptuous but deadly human inferno" known as Flame Madlok (vicious sorcerer with a sinister past) and Sondra (a radical feminist and brain-splitting psychic). Some combination, huh? Besides, any game that offers such special powers as vampirism is worth playing on that basis alone!

While on the subject of spooks and superheroes, Lucas Arts will be offering *Defenders of Dynatron City* this fall for the NES. In this intriguing entry, a team of super-powered good guys including Toolbox, Buzzsaw Girl, Monkey Kid, Jet Headstrong, Ms. Megawatt and Radium Dog are pitted against Dr. Mayhem, Atom Ed, the Floating Head, an army of robot drone soldiers and other creepy minions. In case you haven't heard of any of these characters, no need to shore up your comic book IQ. They're all original LucasArts creations.

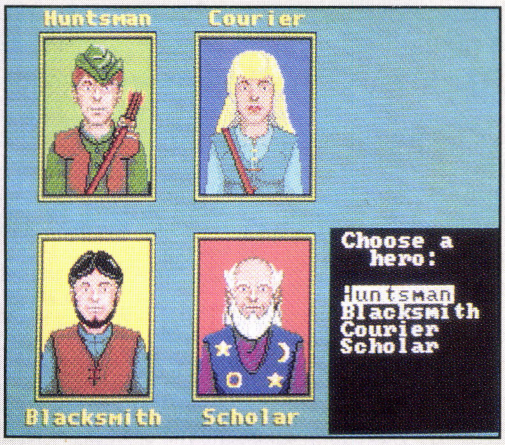
Closing out the subject of comic book adaptations is Konami's *Champions*, due this fall for the PC. Based on the popular nonelectronic board game, *Champions* allows users to build their own super-beings, who then do battle with a variety of sinister super-heels.

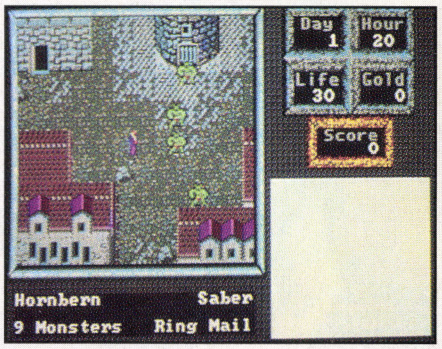
Other original horror titles include a stunning new Genesis version of Will Harvey's *The Immortal* from Electronic Arts, in which the player, as the wizard Mordamir, must seek out and locate his lost mentor through a horrific landscape of traps and terrors. *Keys to Maramon*, from Mindcraft, is an Amiga program in which the player must save the island town of Maramon from the horrible creatures who infest it at night. Then there's *Zombie Nation*, an NES shooter from Meldac, notable mostly for its super sound effects and spooky but colorful graphics.

## Monsters in Your Video Game

Matchbox's "Monster in My Pocket" toys are the basis for Konami's NES video game of the same title. Seems all the most famous monsters got together for a jamboree and were somehow shrunk down to pocket-size as the result of a volcanic eruption. Now a pint-sized vampire and a mini-monster embark on an action-oriented adventure through six game levels in order to find their fellow fiends who were lost in the aftermath of the volcano. Players can use a variety of objects, including compasses, keys and magnets, to outmaneuver the various traps positioned between the questing monsters and their ultimate goal. Remember, the vampire and his sidekick are teeny-weeny, so even ordinary household objects, like vacuum cleaners or a water faucet, can be deadly obstacles! *Monster in My Pocket* is due out in early 1992, but I wonder if the werewolf, mummy and all can wait that long?

Speaking of mummies, that wraps up this year's look at spooky software. So until next Halloween, be good monsters, and keep telling yourself: "It's *only* a *game*! It's *only* a *game*!"




**In Mindcraft's *Keys to Maramon* the gamer must save an island town from the creatures that infest it at night.**

# ROGER CLEMENS

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CIRCLE #130 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

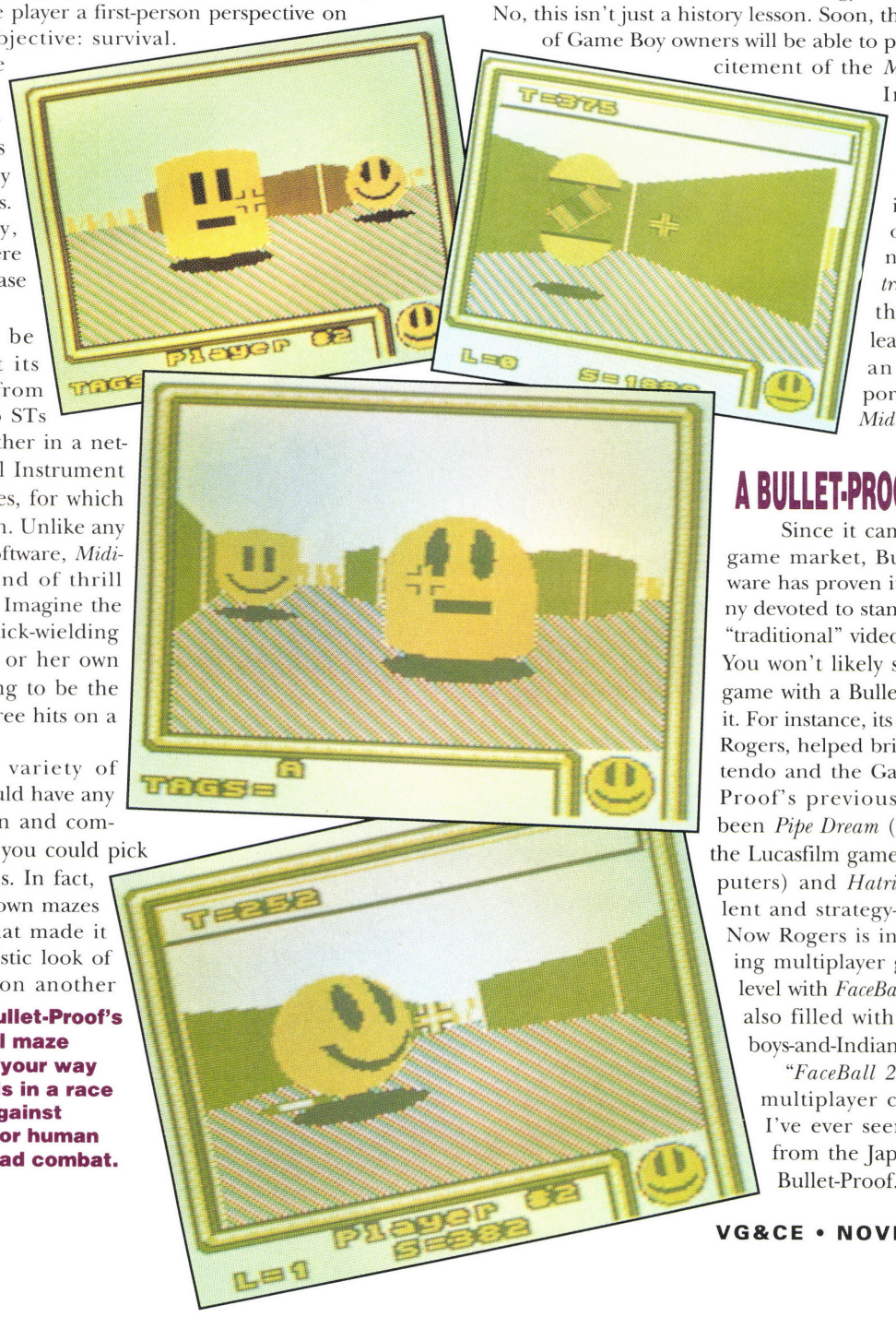
# KILL A HAPPY FACE

by Andy Eddy

Once upon a time, a music-software company called Hybrid Arts released a game for the Atari ST called *MidiMaze*. Originally developed under the working title *Kill a Happy Face* (by a group best known for graphic demos on the Atari computers), the game gave the player a first-person perspective on a maze with a sole objective: survival. What made the game so enjoyable was the nonthreatening appearance, stark walls and an army of "happy faces" cruising the halls. Uncharacteristically, these spherical faces were armed with guns—a case of every face for itself.

The game could be played solitaire, but its popularity stemmed from the fact that up to 16 STs could be hooked together in a network of MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) cables, for which the ST has ports built in. Unlike any other entertainment software, *MidiMaze* provided the kind of thrill never before achieved. Imagine the excitement of 16 joystick-wielding gamers, each with his or her own view of the maze, trying to be the first to get ten kills (three hits on a particular face).

The game had a variety of configurations. You could have any combination of human and computerized players, and you could pick from a library of mazes. In fact, you could create your own mazes in any text editor. What made it more fun was the realistic look of it all. If you came upon another player and saw his face, he, too, would be looking right at you. But if you caught a player looking the other way, you could blast away—shooting someone in the back may be somewhat discourteous, but it's a valid *MidiMaze* battle strategy.




**The many faces of Bullet-Proof's *FaceBall 2000*, a dual maze game: You can work your way through over 70 levels in a race against time, or go against computer-controlled or human players in head-to-head combat.**

No, this isn't just a history lesson. Soon, the giant universe of Game Boy owners will be able to partake in the excitement of the *MidiMaze* legacy. In December, Bullet-Proof Software, best known for bringing the talents of Alexey Pajitnov (*Tetris*, *Welltris* and others) to the U.S., will release *FaceBall 2000*, an updated and portable version of *MidiMaze*.

## A BULLET-PROOF STRATEGY

Since it came to the video-game market, Bullet-Proof Software has proven itself as a company devoted to standing apart from "traditional" video-game software. You won't likely see a scroll-boss game with a Bullet-Proof label on it. For instance, its president, Henk Rogers, helped bring *Tetris* to Nintendo and the Game Boy. Bullet-Proof's previous releases have been *Pipe Dream* (a translation of the Lucasfilm game for home computers) and *Hatris*, both nonviolent and strategy-based contests. Now Rogers is interested in taking multiplayer games to a new level with *FaceBall 2000*, which is also filled with bloodless cowboys-and-Indians-type combat.

"*FaceBall 2000* is the best multiplayer computer game I've ever seen," Rogers said from the Japanese offices of Bullet-Proof.

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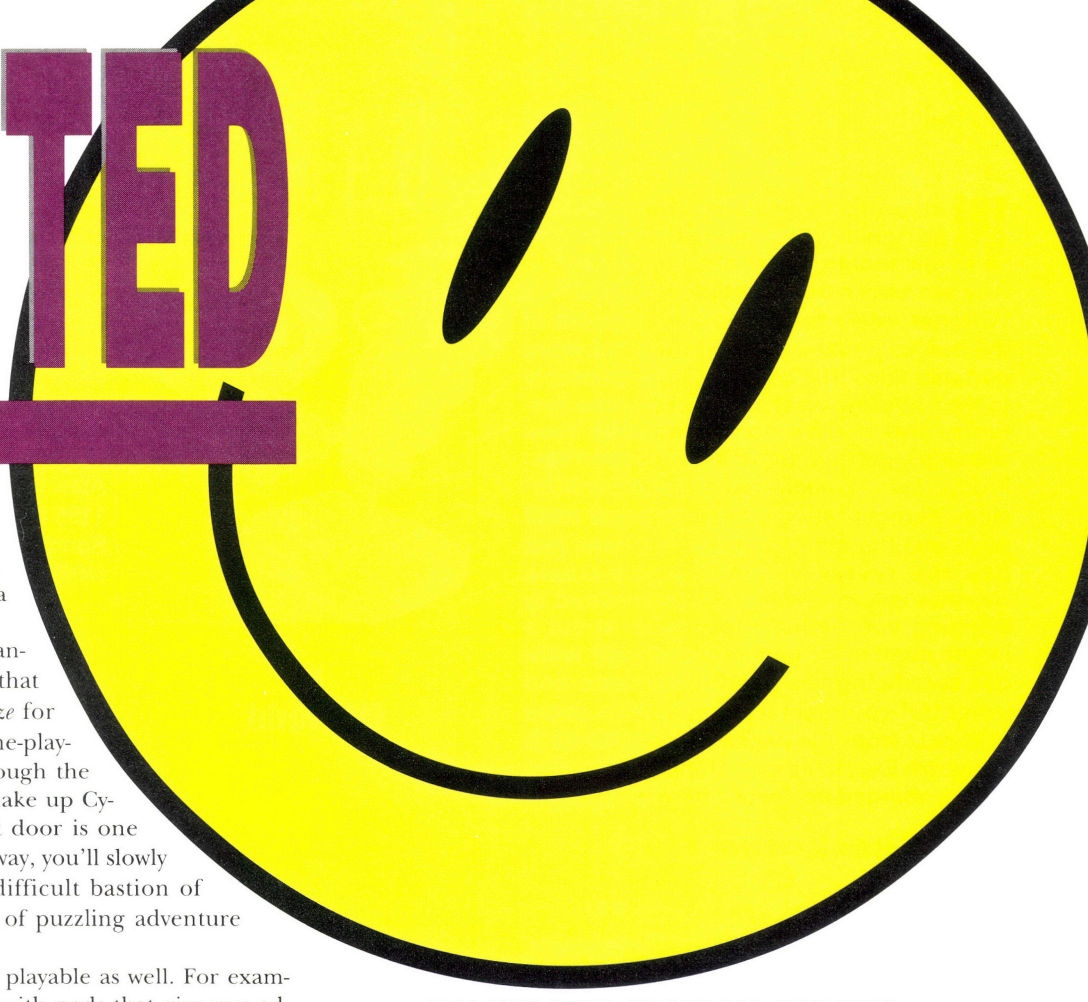


"[*MidiMaze*] is great, but it's hard to get a bunch of STs hooked up in one room. It's certainly easier to get a few Game Boys together."

Programmed by the now Canadian-based Xanth F/X, the same group that created and programmed *MidiMaze* for Hybrid Arts, *FaceBall 2000* is a hot one-player game. The goal is to make it through the more than 70 levels of mazes that make up Cyberscape. Finding the blinking exit door is one thing; survival is another. Along the way, you'll slowly be introduced to an increasingly difficult bastion of faces to overcome. This is the type of puzzling adventure that will drive you crazy.

Xanth has made Cyberscape very playable as well. For example, as you progress you cross paths with pods that give you advice on new enemies you may meet or the benefit of certain items. This leads the rookie player gently into the Cyberscape universe, though the well-versed *FaceBall*er can bypass them with the push of a button. Also, certain pods offer warps once you've passed a particular level. This gives the experienced player the opportunity to skip the simpler, previously mastered levels.

The real fun in *FaceBall 2000*, however, comes from the Arena, the basis of the original *MidiMaze*'s attraction: a variety of mazes that pits player against player...against player...against player. Using the Four-Player Adapter (packaged with Nintendo's *F-1 Race* cartridge), up to four players can go head-to-head in a maze that can be selected from a bunch of preprogrammed labyrinths at the start. These maze layouts can be as simple as an open room or incredibly complex with lots of nooks and crannies that can be used as hiding places. The Arena is wonderfully addictive.

Indeed, VG&CE's editors had a hard time getting anything done once a *FaceBall 2000* competition was started up. It's a pure adrenaline rush when you hit the **SELECT** button (which switches from the *Battlezone*-like point-of-view perspective to the overhead map) and find that you're right around the corner from another player. Even though damage can be "repaired" if a face hasn't been hit for a while, it takes three hits to kill a player. Therefore, you have to be both aggressive and cautious at the same time. In fact, strategies must be developed: A basic strategy consists of ducking behind a wall until an opening is realized, popping out to blast off a shot, then slipping back behind the safety of the wall. Of course, backing into a corner can be potentially fatal. You also may find yourself in a crossfire between two players. It's a simple game to learn and play, but it's heavy on strategy.

## TEA FOR TWO, FACEBALL FOR TEN

While most of the video games out these days don't encourage "social" playing, *FaceBall 2000* is a welcome exception. In fact, when *FaceBall 2000* was first shown at the Winter CES in January 1991, Bullet-Proof was showing off the game's networking capabilities. The demo centered around a custom cable that the company was hoping to pack in each *FaceBall 2000* box. This cable allowed up to *ten* players to compete simultaneously with little or no effect on the processing speed. Rogers considers the programming group that completed *FaceBall 2000* to be among the best Game Boy programmers. Certainly, playing the game bears that out.

"From the beginning," Rogers explained, "everyone—including me—doubted that this could be done on the Game Boy. There's so much going on that there is little calculating time."

For the record, Bullet-Proof hasn't squelched the chances that the ten-player *FaceBall 2000* cable might eventually be released anyway. "We want to listen to the voice of our players. If I hear enough of 'I want to be able to play with a bunch of friends,' I'll do it," Rogers noted.

Rogers made a point that the Game Boy version is simply the beginning of a series. It's encouraging that he started to talk about *Face Ball 4000*, an SNES version of *FaceBall 2000*. The multiplayer capabilities will be as prevalent, though some details still have to be worked out. The design calls for either a two- or four-player split screen, which will enable each player to view the action from his own face's perspective. This version is targeted for release around the spring of 1992.

Come Christmas, though, the cry will echo across the land, from Game Boy to Game Boy: Have you killed a happy face today?

# GAMING ON THE GO

by
Chris Bieniek

Welcome, friends, to the world of portable video games! Starting this month, we're changing the way we cover the portable systems. With the recent growth in this segment of the industry, we're seeing more and more portable titles that compare very favorably to their cousins on the full-sized game systems, and there's no reason why they shouldn't get the same kind of coverage. From now on, each game review will include number ratings, the suggested retail price and the manufacturer's address, just like the reviews in our *Video-Game Reviews* column. We're also committed to bringing you better information about a larger number of games per month without sacrificing the candid opinions and insightful commentary that you've come to expect from the pages of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT. Hope your batteries are charged up, 'cause here we go.

## Checkered Flag

**ATARI**

**For the Atari Lynx ($39.99)**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **6** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Every game system should have at least one decent auto-racing game, and the Lynx is no longer an exception. *Checkered Flag* is not a true first-person driving game like *Super Monaco GP* or *Hard Drivin'*, where the road is seen through your windshield and your car's exterior doesn't appear on the screen. It's more along the lines of *Rad Racer* or the classic *Enduro*.

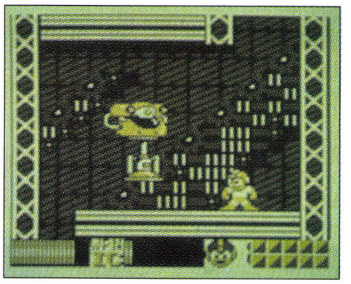
The Lynx's hardware-scaling capabilities make this one of the best-looking racing games yet. Roadside objects and traffic appear on the horizon and grow smoothly, and when they pass, you can see them shrink into the distance in the rear-view mirrors that are positioned on both sides of your display. I got a big kick out of the billboards—they advertise every imaginable Atari product, from future Lynx releases to the ST home computer line and even the "palmtop" Portfolio computer.

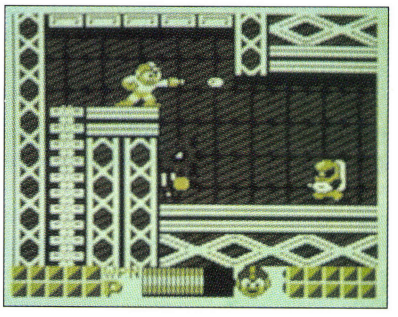
But the best thing about *Checkered Flag* is the number of available options. You can choose from a whole hatful of courses to race on at different locations across the country, set the number of laps, choose manual or automatic transmission, change the color of your car, set the number of other competing cars on the track (from zero to nine, up to six players can "Lynx up") and even identify whether you're a male or female driver! The latter choice has no effect on your performance, but will change the gender of the person who walks out in a swimsuit at the end of the race to give you a trophy and a kiss.

The car handles smoothly enough to keep the frustration level down low, and the graphic treats and digitized sounds combine with the aforementioned options to make *Checkered Flag* a winner.

Atari Corporation
1196 Borregas Ave.
Sunnyvale, CA 94088-3427
(408) 745-2000

***MegaMan in Dr. Wily's Revenge*, by Capcom.**





## MegaMan in Dr. Wily's Revenge

**CAPCOM**

**For the Nintendo Game Boy ($29.95)**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |

It's always a pleasure when old friends from the NES show their faces on the other side of the Game Boy's magic window, and *MegaMan* is one of the oldest and friendliest. I always felt that if his first NES adventure hadn't been cloaked in the ugliest box art of all time, he'd be a lot more popular than he already is.

For the uninitiated, MegaMan is a humanoid robot created by a benevolent scientist named Dr. Light. In his latest adventure, MegaMan has to fight through four robot mazes, a factory complex with four more robots inside and the ultimate challenge at the "Space Node," lair of the evil Dr. Wily. Every time our hero defeats one of Dr. Wily's robot masters, he acquires the ability to use that character's weapon in addition to his own plasma cannon.

*MegaMan* fans are sure to recognize villains like "Cutman" and "Elecman" from the first *MegaMan* game—and their musical themes sound better than ever on the Game Boy in full stereo.

There's not much here that's really new or innovative—MegaMan is basically a science fiction (Super) Mario with lots of neat weapons. He runs, jumps and shoots just like most other video-game heroes, but the universe he inhabits is slick, dynamic and full of personality. The cartoonish looks of the background graphics and all of the enemy creatures are so clearly recognizable that NES veterans could probably identify the game without even seeing the main character.

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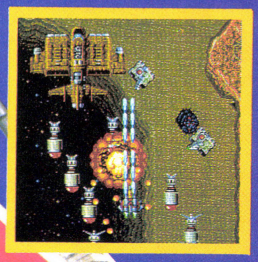

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Whether you're a longtime fan of the NES *MegaMan* series or just a Game Boy rookie, you'll probably enjoy *MegaMan in Dr. Wily's Revenge*. But don't be deceived by the charming graphics and comical enemies—this is a pretty tough game, and I've got the sore fingers to prove it.
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Santa Clara, CA 95054
(408) 727-0400

## Turbo Sub

**ATARI**

**For the Atari Lynx ($34.99)**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **6** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |

If you heard the name *Turbo Sub* and expected a boring, slow-paced submarine simulator, you're in for a surprise. I was floored when I got my first look at this game—it's the hottest first person shoot-'em-up I've seen in months.

At the helm of your ultra-powerful turbo sub, you'll see a breathtaking view of Earth in the 28th century through the cockpit window. The game's instruction manual spins a mercifully brief tale of "intergalactic barbarians" who must be eliminated, but this is truly one of those games that needs no documentation. Armed with an electro-plasma cannon, a supply of mega-bombs and the ability to purchase bonus weapons and power-ups, your real assignment is to survive long enough to get a look at all of the neat enemies and tricky obstacles that lie in store.

The game's soundtrack downplays music in favor of a gloriously noisy symphony of sizzling lasers, thunderous explosions and rattling collisions. But *Turbo Sub*'s graphics really steal the show. When the ship is submerged, you really feel like you're passing through a murky, bubbly ocean, and you can see the grit of sand and the skeletons of long-dead creatures lying at the bottom of the briny deep. The sub can fly, too, which offers a great pseudo 3-D effect with the water rippling beneath you and clouds shifting in the distance. The transitions between these two scenarios are stunning—watch how the water splashes and slides off the cockpit window when you surface.

Though it's occasionally impossible to avoid certain underwater obstacles, *Turbo Sub* handles pretty well. It's one of the fastest Lynx titles yet, and the variety of enemies (mutant barracudas, giant *I, Robot*-style heads) gives the theme a lot more play value than you might expect.
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1196 Borregas Ave.
Sunnyvale, CA 94088-3427
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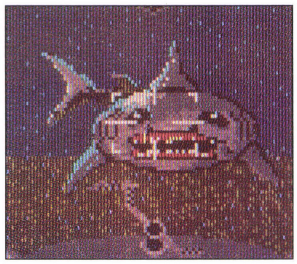
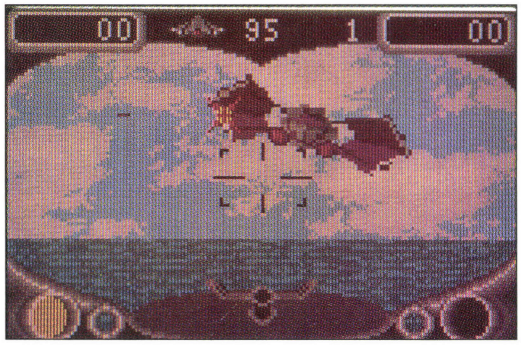
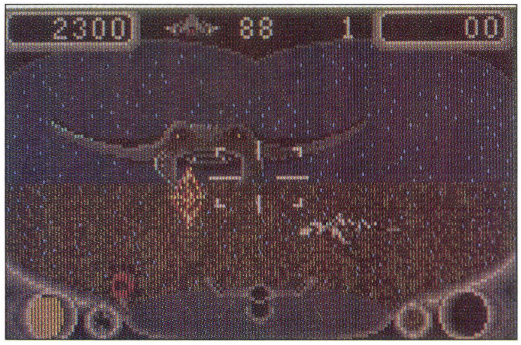
**Turbo Sub, by Atari.**






## Choplifter II

**JVC**

**For the Nintendo Game Boy ($27.95)**

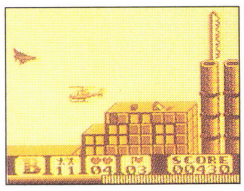
| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |

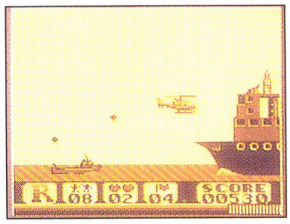
JVC's first portable game resurrects the theme of an old computer title—namely, Dan Gorlin's groundbreaking *Choplifter*. "Portable" is an apt word in more ways than one, since the game has already been "ported" from the computers to the arcades and even to the Sega Master System. A good game should be able to find a home on any machine, and this one seems perfectly comfortable with the Game Boy's small screen and monotone graphics.

In *Choplifter II*, you'll pilot a powerful AH-90 Comanche attack helicopter on a series of rescue missions in the heart of a raging war. You'll need the patience of a saint and the gaming skills of a Nauert if you expect to make it through the battlefield without being taken down by a mortar shell, a thunderstorm or even a stray seagull. When you see hostages on the ground flailing their arms, you set your chopper down, pick them up and fly them back to the embassy. That sounds easy enough when you're hovering over a simple landscape of buildings and trees—but soon you'll move on to more difficult missions where you'll have to maneuver through a series of underground caverns and where the hairsbreadth between your chopper's blades and a craggy rock wall can mean the difference between success and the scrap heap.

The graphics and sounds are above average, but the thing that makes *Choplifter II* fun is the engaging game play. The chopper is easy to control, and the level of challenge is perfectly balanced—it's never ridiculously easy, and it's never frustratingly difficult. Best of all, the increase in the game's challenge from one level to the next is orchestrated with great care, and the result is a fairly addicting contest.
JVC Musical Industries, Inc.
Games Division
3800 Barham Blvd., Suite 305
Los Angeles, CA 90068
(213) 878-0101

**Choplifter II, by JVC.**





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|---|---|
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| | |
|---|---|
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| | |
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| | |
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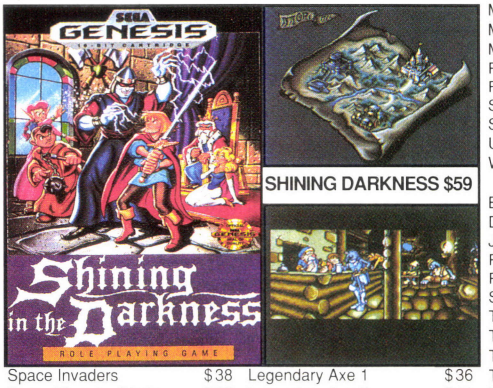


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|---|---|
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|---|---|
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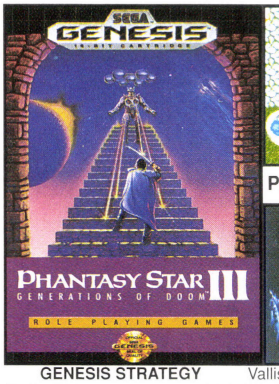


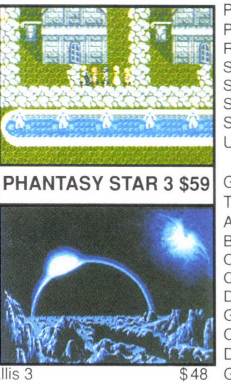

PHANTASY STAR 3 $59

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|---|---|
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| | |
|---|---|
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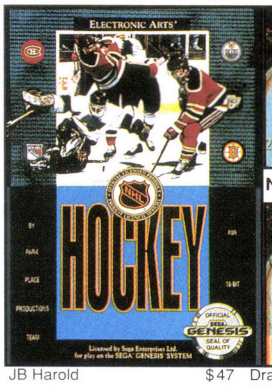


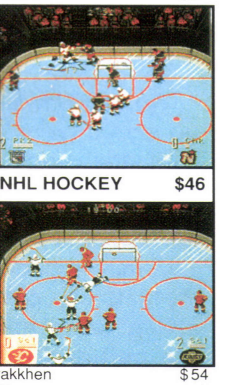

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### TG16 SHOOTERS

| | |
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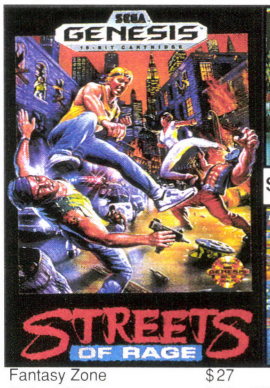


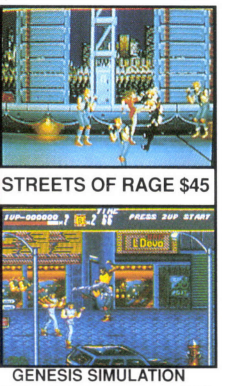


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| | |
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### GENESIS SIMULATION

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## Slider

**SEGA**

**For the Sega Game Gear ($29.95)**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | **5** | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | **5** | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |

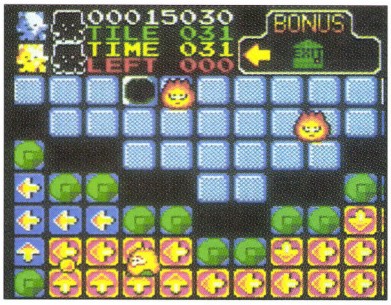
No, not *Strider*, not yet anyway. There's no way anyone is going to confuse this cute little cartridge with that 8-meg Genesis monster—though it's interesting to note that the game has appeared in Japan as *Skweek*, a PC Engine title.

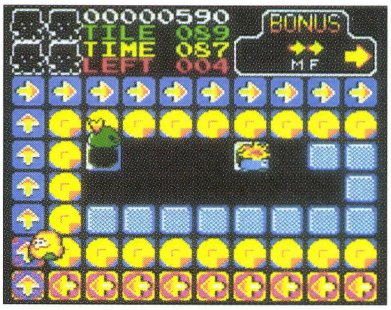
*Slider* is a kind of action/puzzle game that lets you control the title character, a smiley-faced furball who must clean up the polluted land of Rozen by sliding over "tiles" and changing their color to pink. You'll have a gun to keep the ghosts, blobs and "fire faces" out of your way, and there are a lot of interesting power-ups and hidden warps that keep you on your toes in your race against the clock.

Each level is several screens wide, and many of them are extremely difficult to clear without experiencing some sort of mishap. I'm not going to reveal how many areas exist in *Slider*. Before I got my hands on the documentation, I had no idea how many there were, and that seems to have contributed to my enjoyment of the game. I expected it to end after 50 or so, and I was delighted to see a level 51, and 52 and 53.

*Slider*'s biggest flaw is a problem that's unique to games on the portable systems: an interesting catch-22 exists with regard to the game's difficulty factor. Without a password system, you probably wouldn't be able to play through the entire game before the batteries died in your Game Gear—but with the passwords, the game seems too easy and a bit too short. Fortunately, the large number of levels softens this potentially fatal blow, and the game is too colorful and addicting to put down for too long.

Sega of America, Inc.
130 Shoreline Drive
Redwood City, CA 94065
(415) 508-2800




***Slider*, by Sega.**

## Pac-Man

**NAMCO**

**For the Sega Game Gear ($29.95)**

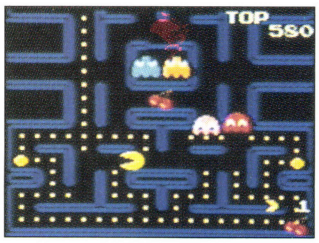
| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | **3** | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **6** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

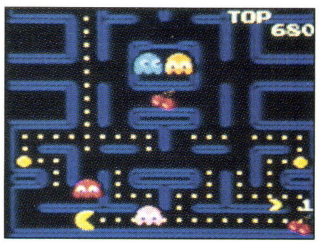
Yeah, I've still got "*Pac-Man* Fever." Some of us will never grow out of it. This little yellow guy has been chompin' dots and chasing after ghosts for a decade now, but I can still remember the first time I dropped two bits into a *Pac-Man* machine.

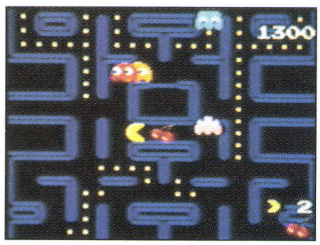
That maze feels like home now, and Inky, Blinky, Pinky and Clyde are like old friends. I can't guarantee that everyone will feel this way about the Game Gear version of *Pac-Man*, but it's as close to the arcade original as you can get. It doesn't even come close to the limits of the Game Gear's technical abilities—though I can't help wondering how this version would have been received in 1982. Back then, gamers were content with flickering, blocky one-note interpretations of the theme, not to mention black-and-white LCD tabletop models. At the time, I would have *devoured* this game—the Game Gear is truly as powerful as many of the full-sized coin-op machines of the day.

Interestingly, the sound seems to play a major role in keeping the game faithful to its coin-op roots. The tunes and sound effects (waka waka waka!) are reproduced with uncanny accuracy, right down to the slight echo effect that makes the opening theme send chills up my spine.

There are many who will undoubtedly claim that *Pac-Man*'s primitive game play has no place in today's electronic entertainment industry, and others will complain that the game was meant to be played with a joystick and not a control pad. I'll agree with the latter—at times it's pretty tough to steer the little guy—but




***Pac-Man*, by Namco.**

the former is a fallacy. There's a market for video-game nostalgia, and I hope that Namco and the Game Gear will find it.

Namco Hometek, Inc.
3255-1 Scott Blvd., Suite 102
Santa Clara, CA 95054-3013
(408) 496-6371

Next month, we'll find out what happens when the hottest NES game of 1991 gets squeezed into the Game Boy. Let us know how you feel about the new, improved *Gaming on the Go*—send your comments and suggestions to **VIDEO GAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, Attn: *Gaming on the Go*, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210.**

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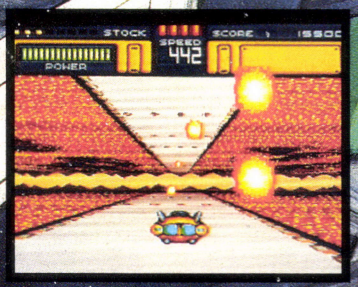

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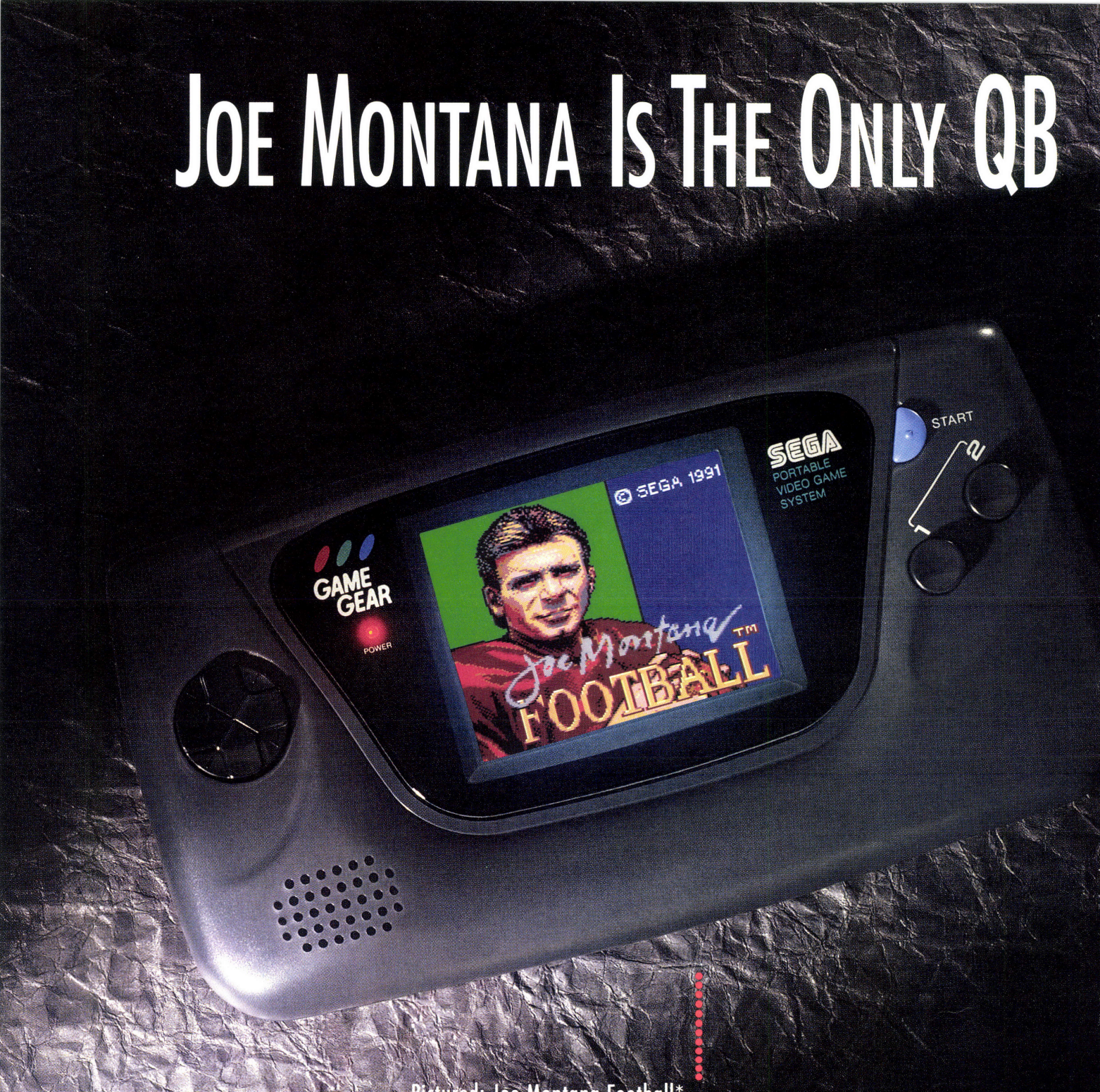


Pictured: Joe Montana Football*

Columns
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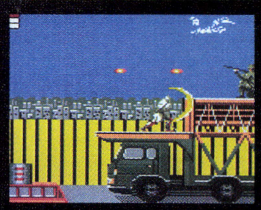
Shinobi



Castle of Illusion starring Mickey Mouse

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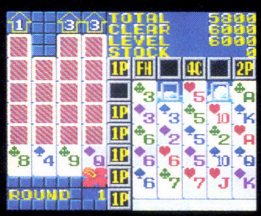


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CIRCLE #136 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

# State of the Art

## A Look at the Games That Set the Standards

BY BILL KUNKEL & ARNIE KATZ

It's a phrase we hear all the time. Reviewers refer to a new product or to that title's sound, graphics and/or interface as "state of the art." What do these four words, electronic gaming's ultimate compliment, *really* mean? Which video and computer games genuinely represent state of the art in modern interactive entertainment?

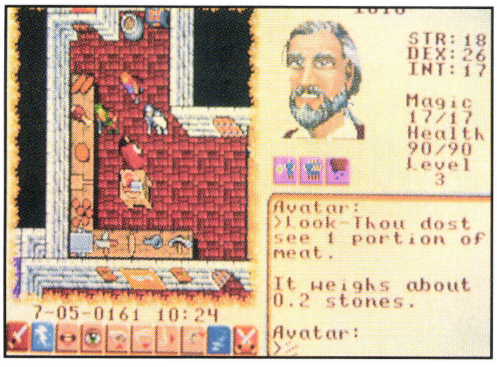
This is a difficult question, because critics apply that simple-sounding phrase in two different ways. A game may be state of the art in terms of electronic gaming, or it may simply be state of the art for a specific computer or game system. This article considers *all* forms of electronic entertainment in competition. The Game Boy versus the Neo•Geo; IBM PC computers versus the slickest coin-ops. In short, we are talking *pure* state of the art; the best home electronic gaming can offer.

## The Art of the Interface

The term "state of the art" generally does not refer to a game's design. As a rule it deals with the implementation of a game's concept. Designs are ideas, and ranking gaming's best thinkers is beyond the scope of this article and possibly the ability of the authors.

One thing we can talk about here is the interface; the device or system through which the user interacts with the game. Though adventure-game interfaces are the kind most frequently mentioned, for good or ill, *all* games have an interface. Electronic games couldn't be interactive if players didn't have some means of communicating with the game program.

In most cases, a mouse, joystick or other control device is the primary, if not only, interface device. The trend has been toward the user-friendly, transparent interface. Publishers have systematically eliminated cumbersome parsers and complex, keyboard-oriented systems in favor of menu- and icon-driven interfaces.




Games that are generally regarded as possessing a state-of-the-art interface include *King's Quest V* (Sierra/IBM PC), *Ultima VI* (Origin/IBM PC), *Rise of the Dragon* (Dynamix/IBM PC) and *Eye of the Beholder* (SSI/IBM PC). Let's take a look at each and see why they qualify for this elite company.

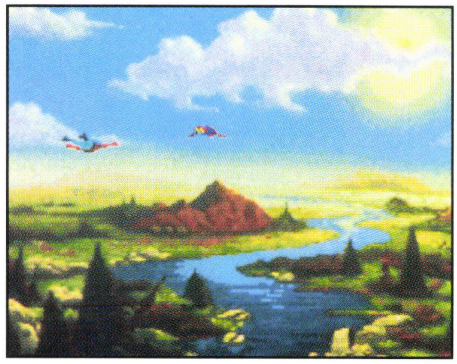
Roberta Williams' *Kings Quest* epics have been among the most successful adventure games in the history of electronic entertainment, but before the fifth installment, the interface used was not highly regarded. *KQ V* changed all that by stripping away the parser and substituting a series of icons representing all relevant commands (walk, travel, look, action, talk). At long last, a series that has traditionally represented state of the art in sound and graphics has an interface worthy of it.

*Ultima VI* also represented a major break with earlier chapters in Lord British's epic adventure series, again through the use of icons representing the necessary commands. This same interface also appears in the first *Worlds of Ultima* adventure, *The Savage Empire* (Origin/IBM PC).

Nothing remains state of the art forever; that's the nature of life on the cutting edge. One day you've revolutionized game play, and the next day some clever young turk adds a wrinkle or two to the scheme and displaces your now-dated game system.

The most significant breakthroughs in terms of a gaming interface in the last five years were probably FTL's *Dungeon Master* and Icom's *Déjà Vu*. The *Dungeon Master* interface has been modified and adapted by numerous developers, most recently by Westwood Associates for *Eye of the Beholder* (SSI). It marked the first significant advance in fantasy role-playing interfaces since Woodhead and Greenberg revolutionized electronic RPGs with *Wizardry*. *Dungeon Master* set new standards in several areas, some of which have since been surpassed, but the flexibility and simplicity of its control scheme present a wide range of options without undue complexity.

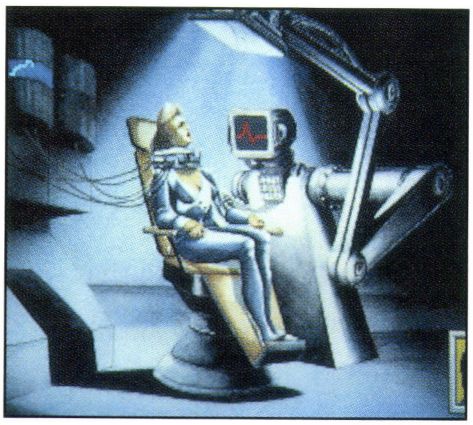
Similarly, Icom revolutionized first-person adventures with its remarkable point-and-click interface introduced in *Déjà Vu, Shadowgate* and *The Uninvited* (all from Mindscape). In these games, players point an on-screen cursor at any object on the screen, from a water faucet to a particular book on a library shelf. After selecting an object, the gamer moves the cursor to a menu of verbs (open, close, take, use, etc.) to interact with it.

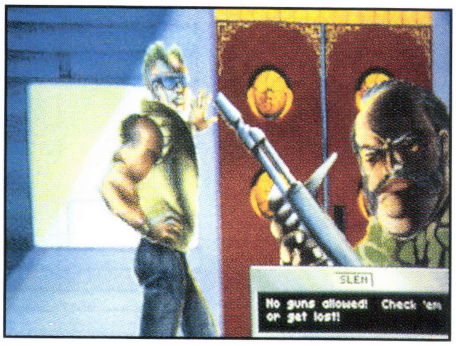


**Top left and above: *King's Quest V*, by Sierra On-Line. Bottom left: Origin Systems' *Ultima VI*.**

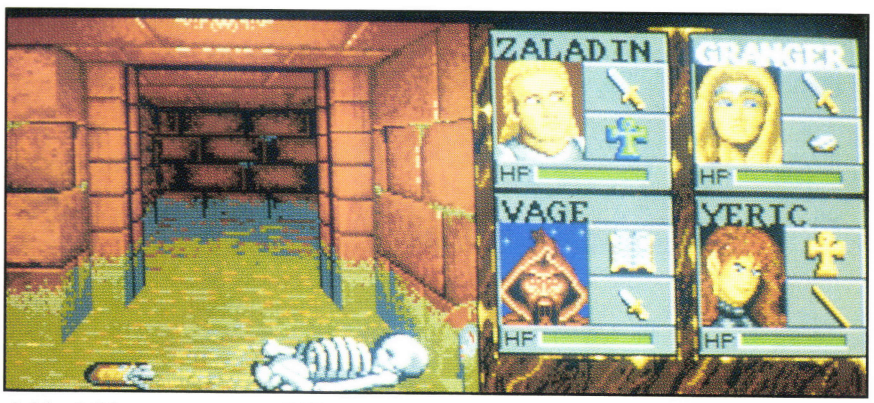
The system was simplicity itself, though it had certain built-in weaknesses. For one thing, the finite number of choices allows a relentless gamer to click every possible action. For another, the system had no satisfactory method of conversation with non-player characters.

The old Icom system has been updated, and in some cases, totally revamped by today's leading edge developers, such as Dynamix. Jeff Tunnell's *Rise of the Dragon* uses a state-of-the-art version of the point-and-click interface and throws in a feature






***Rise of the Dragon*, by Dynamix (left and below), and SSI's *Eye of the Beholder* (bottom) are both regarded as having state-of-the-art interfaces.**




dubbed "the smart cursor." The smart cursor changes according to the situation; the cursor changes to an exit sign, for example, when it is placed over a position representing a way out of the current location. When it is pointing to a character with whom you can converse, it transforms into a word balloon. And finally, when you want to take a closer look at a given object, it can be changed into a magnifying glass.

## What's That I Hear, State of the Art Audio?

Sound has come into its own in electronic entertainment only within the past few years. A few appropriate beeps and boops and some simple theme music were enough in gaming's stone age, but 16-bit video-game systems and the PC sound board boom have raised the sound stakes considerably.

State-of-the-art sound is available on several different computer- and video-game systems. The TurboGrafx-16's CD drive, for example, produces music that's as good as the amplifier and speakers. It is played through, but it does not necessarily represent state of the art. *Y's (Books 1 & 2)* (NEC/TurboGrafx-16 CD) swept most of the sound category awards given out by video-game magazines last year, but the audio is not interactive; it simply plays in the background, regardless of what the player-character does on-screen. This is the equivalent of listening to a record while playing a game.

True interactive sound effects and music are available to gamers with an IBM PC machine equipped with a Roland sound board (the MT-32 or the LAPC-1), and Sierra adventures (especially the *Space Quest* games) represent the best of the best. The Sega

# STATE OF THE ART SURVEY

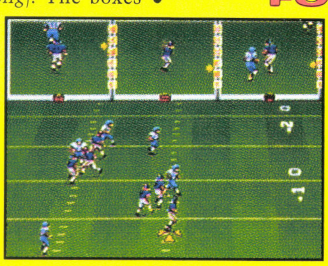
TRUE STATE-OF-THE-ART GAMING DEFIES CATEGORIZATION. *Star Tropics* (Nintendo), for example, represents state of the art in the 8-bit world, but it would hardly turn a head in an arcade. When it comes to adventure gaming, on the other hand, the strongest arcade entry could hardly be expected to hold a candle to *Ultima VI*.

In the early '80s, coin-ops *were* state of the art. In terms of sound, graphics and game design, the arcades were the cutting edge, and the home-gaming market was largely obsessed with producing the best possible facsimile of those coin-ops. To give some idea of the extent to which coin-ops dominated the entire electronic-gaming universe, remember that most of the early Coleco-produced games for its own Colecovision were coin-op licenses (*Cosmic Avenger, Ladybug, Donkey Kong*). The boxes that housed these cartridges all used the same simple cover format: a color photo of the original coin-op's cabinet. That was it. Coleco's reasoning was obvious: the very fact that a game was a coin-op license gave it credibility and quality no non-license could even aspire to.

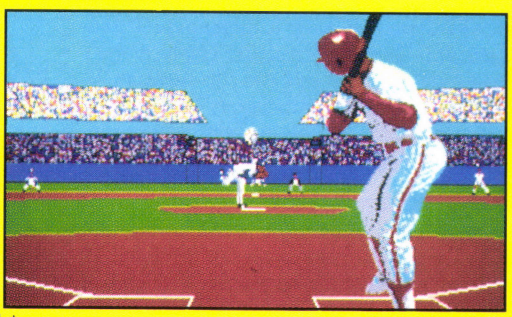
These days, arcade games represent state of the art only in isolated cases. Last year's *Hard Drivin'* (Atari) represented state of the art in terms of polygon-fill driving simulations, and this year *Race Drivin'* picks up the banner. But in categories such as sports, RPGs, flight and combat simulators, strategy and even arcade-action, the coin-ops are equalled, if not bettered, by the current generation of home-entertainment devices. The Neo•Geo video-game system (SNK), for example, is the same technology that drives SNK's arcade games.

Here, then, is a rundown of what qualifies as state of the art in a sampling of categories:

### FOOTBALL



•*John Madden Football* (Electronic Arts/Sega Genesis)—Football action-strategy is taken to dizzying heights of brilliance by the development group Park Place. Sound, graphics and interface all represent high-water marks in electronic-entertainment history.

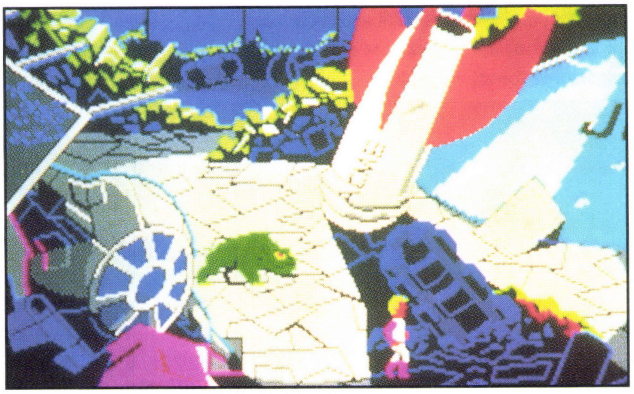


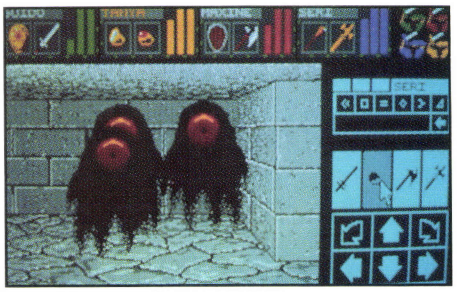
### BASEBALL

•*Earl Weaver Baseball II* (Electronic Arts/IBM PC)—Eddie Dombrower has created a true state-of-the-art baseball experience with this revamp of the popular *Earl Weaver Baseball*. In addition to a solid statistical underpinning, *EWB II* allows users to position the game "cameras" literally anywhere on or outside the field.

### GOLF

•*Links* (Access/IBM PC)—Spectacular VGA graphics and intelligent design create a golfing simulation of unparalleled realism. Additional course disks include Firestone, Bountiful and Bayhill.





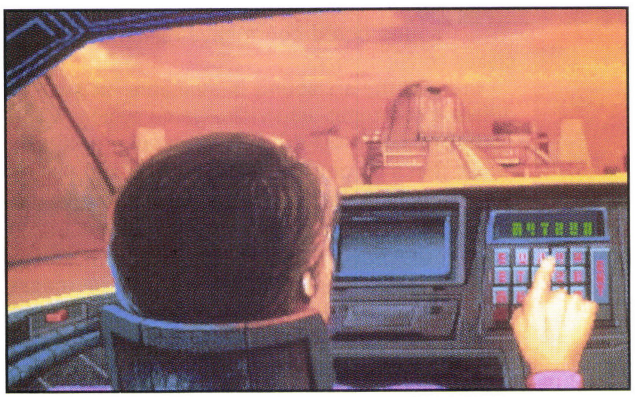
**Sierra's *Space Quest III* and *IV* (top and bottom left, respectively) represent the "best of the best" in state-of-the-art audio. At the time of its release, FTL's *Dungeon Master* (top right) was a significant breakthrough in terms of gaming interface. Mindscape's *Shadowgate* (bottom right).**

## State-of-the-Art Art: Graphics

Quality graphics are crucial to a successful game for obvious reasons. Oftentimes the only guides a gamer has when purchasing software are the playfield photographs on the back of the game box.

The trend toward VGA versions of PC games has brought the IBM PC systems up to and, in some cases, beyond the visual sophistication of the Commodore Amiga. State-of-the-art graphics can be seen in the Amiga versions of *It Came From the Desert* and *Lords of the Rising Sun* (both Cinemaware) and on IBM PC computers, in Access Software's astounding golf simulation *Links*.

*It Came From the Desert* offers stunning visuals to complement a game based on the popular giant insect movies of the '50s (*Them, Beginning of the End, The Black Scorpion, Tarantula*), while *Lords of the Rising Sun* brings the sweep and grandeur of battle to the gaming screen for the very first time.



Genesis also boasts extremely impressive stereo sound—best appreciated with headphones—as does the tiny Atari Lynx. An impressive array of state-of-the-art music and sound effects can be heard on *Mickey Mouse in the Castle of Illusion* (Sega/Genesis), *Star Control* (Ballistic/Genesis) and *Klax* (Tengen/Lynx).

•*PGA Tour Golf* (Electronic Arts/IBM PC)—For a combination of good graphics and ease of play, this golf game is hard to beat. For non-VGA PC users, this is state of the art; for everyone else, it's pretty darned close.

### HOCKEY

•*TV Sports: Hockey* (Cinemaware/TurboGrafx-16)—Extremely realistic graphics and a great interface allow this entry to supplant *Superstar Ice Hockey* (Mindscape/Various computer systems) as the best available hockey simulation, home or arcade.

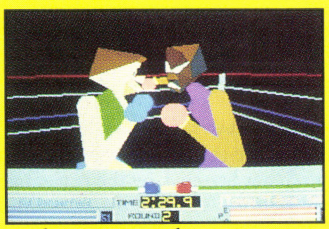
### BASKETBALL

•*TV Sports: Basketball* (Cinemaware/IBM PC)—Cinemaware has always prided itself on presenting state-of-the-art product with each of its games. *TV Sports: Basketball* offers unparalleled graphic excellence in a roundball simulation.

•*Lakers Vs. Celtics* (Electronic Arts/IBM PC)—Depending on personal taste, this game is either slightly better or slightly worse than *TV Sports: Basketball*. In either case, it still represents state of the art in terms of simulating real on-court players in action.

### BOXING

•*Sports Simulated Boxing* (Brøderbund/IBM PC)—DSI, best known for the first two *Test Drive* games, has moved into the sports-simulation genre, and the result is a knockout of a boxing game. Complete CAD-style options allow the user to set the "camera" from any point in the arena, including a true first-person perspective from either boxer!



### TENNIS

•*Sports Simulated Tennis* (Brøderbund/IBM PC)—Also produced by DSI (see *Simulated Sports Boxing* above), this game takes the same visual approach with tennis, letting the user position the game "camera" anywhere on or near the court. Truly impressive stuff.

### STUNT DRIVING

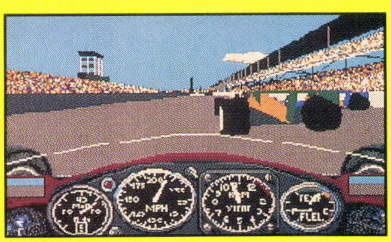
•*Race Drivin'* (Atari/Coin-Op)—Even more amazingly realistic than *Hard Drivin'* (Atari), this upgrade offers gamers a choice of four vehicles and four tracks, including the Autocross, with a computerized pace car and lap timer, and the Super Stunt track, which boasts a mountain road, a jump and a corkscrew loop. The polygon-fill graphics are breathtaking, and the game speed is phenomenal.

### DRIVING

•*Rad Mobile* (Sega/Coin-Op)—This 32-bit driving simulation is an eye-popping spin through traffic-clogged city streets into the country and over treacherous mountain roads. The bit-mapped graphics have to be seen to be believed. (The sit-down model is recommended over the upright, which is true of most coin-op driving games.)

### AUTO RACING

•*Indianapolis 500* (Electronic Arts/IBM PC)—Race the Indy then watch your performance replayed from your choice of camera angles. High performance stuff.



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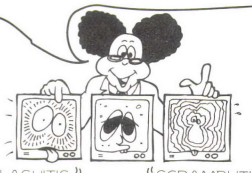

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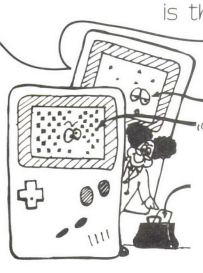

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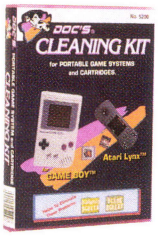


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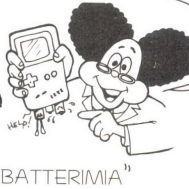

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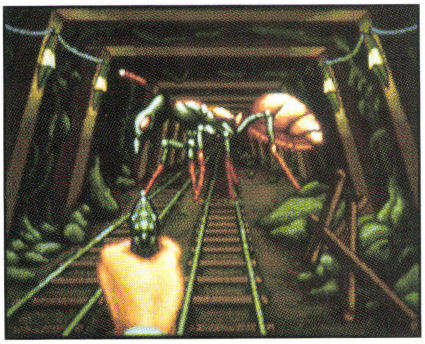
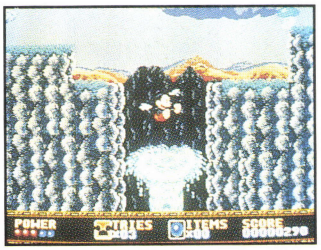
*Links* presents golf course graphics so rich, so lushly textured, that the images almost look digitized. The airbrush-style artwork offers gamers a truly unique optical experience.

The 16-bit home video-game systems also frequently offer state-of-the-art graphics, as seen in games like *Castle of Illusion Starring Mickey Mouse* (Sega/Genesis), *Tommy Lasorda Baseball* (Sega/Genesis), *Baseball Stars* (SNK/Neo•Geo), *Nam 1975* (SNK/Neo•Geo) and *Devil's Crush* (NEC/TurboGrafx-16).





**Top left and right: *It Came From the Desert* and *Lords of the Rising Sun*, both by Cinemaware. Above: Sega's *Mickey Mouse in the Castle of Illusion*.**

## Tomorrow's State of the Art

Crystal ball-gazing is a difficult business; there are so many factors at work that it is virtually impossible to see more than only the broad outlines of any possible future.

CD technology is temporarily stalled while the industry waits for a more viable CD format than the current audio-compatible one. Still, CD seems inevitable, ultimately, for both the video- and computer-game industry. From the video-game point of view, CD is a much cheaper medium than ROM cartridges, while computer-game publishers, especially those who produce lavish adventure games (Sierra, Dynamix and Origin, for instance) are at the point where VGA versions of major releases require a dozen or more floppy disks and all but fill up any hard drive.

Talk of a 32-bit video-game system continues, and the 386 processor is fast becoming the standard for IBM PC based computers. With all this competition in the home market, the arcades will be hard-pressed to compete for the entertainment dollar. Will coin-ops up the technological ante? They may have to. In the March '91 issue of *RePlay* magazine, arcade expert Marcus Webb says: "...we now have it from at least three well-connected, reliable sources that a well-known video-game license broker has a deal in the works to bring authentic 3-D vision to coin-op (no glasses needed).... At press time, the broker was reportedly ready to strike a deal with one of the largest Japanese video-game developers...."

Then there are the BattleTech Centers, where video games are married to the league orientation of a bowling alley. It's evident that coin-op developers will have to kick it in gear and come up with more innovative concepts if they want to compete with the increasingly sophisticated home systems.

The only sure thing in this whole business is the certainty that today's state of the art is tomorrow's antique. Electronic gaming is a technology-driven business and technology, like rust, never sleeps.

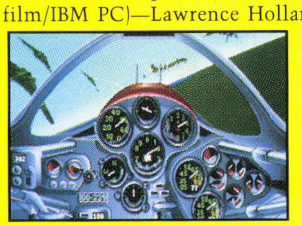
### FLIGHT SIMULATOR (Modern)

•*Flight of the Intruder* (Spectrum HoloByte/IBM PC)—Vietnam-era combat flight simulator based on the best seller by Stephen Coonts. The player controls up to eight friendly aircraft—four A-6 Intruders and four F-4 Phantoms—during the course of a single mission.

•*F-15 Strike Eagle* (Microprose/Coin-Op)—It may not be the easiest coin-op you've ever played, but if it's graphic realism you're looking for, this baby leaves everyone in the dust. Based on the popular computer game, this arcade game will leave you breathless.

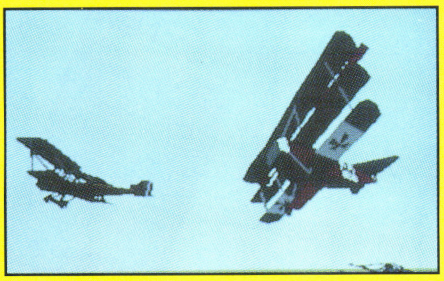
### FLIGHT SIMULATOR (WWII)

•*Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* (Lucasfilm/IBM PC)—Lawrence Holland's high concept follow-up to *Their Finest Hour* offers users nine aircraft and over two-dozen missions.



### FLIGHT SIMULATOR (WWI)

•*Red Baron* (Dynamix/IBM PC)—Elegant, eye-popping World War I action offers 28 different aircraft (German and British) and the Dynamix 3SPACE system. Fly over the German-French front, Verdun, the Somme, Paris and London in either a single mission or an entire campaign.



### SCIENCE FICTION

•*Wing Commander* (Origin/IBM PC)—Incredible state-of-the-art sound and graphics surround the gamer, who plays a space ace engaging the dread Kilrathi in deep space dogfights. Subsequent add-on disks include *Wing Commander (The Secret Missions)* (Origin/IBM PC) and *Wing Commander (The Secret Missions 2: Crusade)* (Origin/IBM PC).

### WAR GAMES

•*Universal Military Simulator 2* (Microprose/ Amiga, IBM PC, Macintosh)—Some wargamers howl about designer Eza Sidran's approach to wargaming, but his miniatures-oriented approach may lift the category to new heights of popularity. *UMS 1* and *UMS 2* aren't just accurate simulations; they are involving and eye-catching depictions of warfare.

•*Napoleon at War* (SSI/IBM PC)—The conventional hexgrid military simulation has been a staple of computer gaming for a decade. No one does it better than SSI, and *Napoleon at War* optimizes every phrase of the company's time-tested formula.

### ARCADE ACTION

•*Smash TV* (Williams/Coin-Op)—This 32-bit action game is reminiscent of the venerable classic *Robotron*, but has all the bells and whistles modern technology can muster.

•*NY Warrior* (Virgin Mastertronic/Amiga)—One of Mastertronic's "Mega" games, this is an exact duplicate of the coin-op. The digitized sound effects are especially state of the art.

### ARCADE ADVENTURE

•*Mickey Mouse in the Castle of Illusion* (Sega/Genesis)—This is the most beautiful, most enchanting side-scrolling action-adventure ever produced.

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| Gotcha | 3/7 |
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| Guardn Lgnd | 4/7 |
| Guerilla War | 8/16 |
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| *Happy Cmpr | 26/44 |
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# I DREAM OF (GAME) GENIE

## THE GALOOB-NINTENDO FRACAS REVERBERATES THROUGH THE GAMING WORLD

by Arnie Katz

***Writer, editor, lecturer and game designer Arnie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each month, his column takes readers inside the world of video and computer games. This month, Arnie talks about the consequences of the Game Genie case.***

The Galoob-Nintendo hassle, though important, isn't the biggest legal engagement in electronic-gaming history. In fact, it probably doesn't qualify as the number-one trial this year. It may not be obvious to gamers frantically trying to get safely past the hula girl to the waiting rocket part in *ToeJam & Earl* (Sega/Genesis), but what happens in court affects what we see on the play screen, and 1991 has seen an unusual number of landmark court cases.

The Galoob case is special, however, because its elements relate to such intriguing subjects as the aesthetics of game design and the rights of consumers. Everyone has read the headlines, but I thought you'd like to know the inside story.

Nintendo sued Lewis Galoob Toys and secured an injunction to prevent distribution of the toy company's Game Genie NES-compatible controller. Invented by Britain's Darling brothers, the Game Genie allows the player to input codes that temporarily alter one or more facets of the game's rules. For example, by entering the correct code, found in a booklet included with the Game Genie, a gamer can slow down the play-speed, give the hero extra power-ups, gain additional lives, and so forth. In other words, the Game Genie sets up variable difficulty for games that previously have not had such options.

Nintendo claimed that providing a method that lets a player zip through a game at a much lower-than-normal difficulty setting ruins the market potential for that title. Galoob countered that the buyer of a video game should have the right to use that game as he or she wishes. They also asserted that the Game Genie doesn't permanently alter the game, and it lets adults and other less skilled players enjoy games they could not otherwise negotiate.

The fight was long and bitter. Nintendo won early victories. Galoob couldn't make or sell Game Genies and missed Christmas 1990. Then Galoob's attorneys began to gain ground. It started to look sunnier for Galoob when the court raised the escrow account that Nintendo was obliged to set up as a contingency against future assessment of damages.

In July the U.S. District Court ruled that Galoob has a right to manufacture and distribute its special controller. What damages, if any, Galoob may seek is a matter for further litigation. Nintendo may decide to appeal this decision, but for now the court has affirmed the Game Genie's right to exist.

As in most cases, there appears to be some right on both sides. In a sense, it was a collision between the rights of the artist and those of the buyer.

I can sympathize with the testimony on behalf of Nintendo, that devices like the Game Genie violate the artistic integrity of the video games. I truly believe that electronic games are an art form, like sculpture or cinema. As a game designer, I want the player to experience the game as I intended when I concocted it.

It's a pride thing. On a considerably loftier level, I'm sure Leonardo da Vinci wouldn't have

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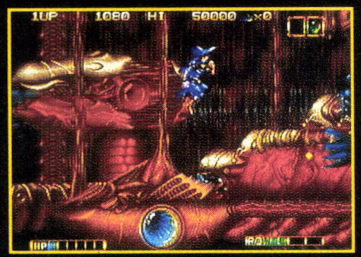


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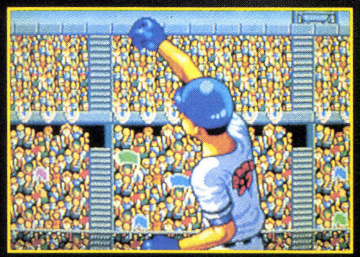

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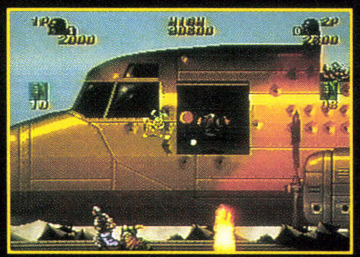

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liked someone drawing a mustache on his Mona Lisa. Designers and developers who have worked long hours to balance a game's play mechanics, victory conditions, speed and difficulty get nervous about anything that disturbs their delicate constructions. Something like the Game Genie, which juggles parameters, worries some of the industry's creative people.

I part company with Nintendo here because this is only the artist's *wish*—it can't be legislated. It is impossible to force someone to look at a painting in a specific way, or stop them from flipping to the last page in the story to peek at the ending out of sequence. When you buy Lou Reed's latest album, the New York rocker would probably like you to listen to his music in the sequence in which he arranged it on the disc, but he can't stop you from using the programming feature of your CD player to put the songs in any desired order.

The ruling that legitimized the Game Genie affirms the rights of the gaming public. NES cartridges are notorious for having a single difficulty setting geared to challenge the best players. Every system needs contests that test the mettle of action aces. Relax, champs, I don't want to take away your heart-pounding shooters.

Electronic gaming is supposed to be for everyone. The super players are just a small fraction of the population; that's what makes them special. Yet there are many potential fans who don't get involved in the hobby because they can't penetrate games with a high skill requirement and no flexibility.

The ideal solution is for Nintendo, and all other game publishers, to provide variable difficulty and adjustable play-elements like the majority of home computer games.

A coin-op must keep difficulty high for economic reasons. The only way the arcade operator makes money is by having coins dropped into the slots, which means that a game that anyone could play for an hour wouldn't earn enough money to justify its place on the amusement center's floor.

Home games labor under no similar imperative. The player has already spent money; if variable difficulty would increase the enjoyment of the average player, shouldn't the companies incorporate it into their products? Since NES games don't have such features, by and large, the Game Genie seems to fill a gap for the typical electronic-gaming consumer.

Nintendo's opposition to this philosophy indicates what I believe to be the central weakness of so many of the cartridges in the NES library—limited replayability. The claim that the Game Genie hurts potential sales speaks directly to this problem.

The Game Genie lets players roar through games they couldn't finish without such help. The implication is that once someone conquers the boss of the top level, they won't touch that cartridge again. Limited playing time leads to reduced customer satisfaction. This hurts word-of-mouth on the existing game and makes it less likely that such NES owners will be as quick to buy the next one.

Nintendo also frets about what the combination of video-cartridge rental and the Game Genie might do to its sales. If the average player can polish off a game in a couple of evenings, and if the games aren't fun to play again once that happens, few rentals will convert into sales, further denting the already soft market for 8-bit titles.

Clearly, the answer to these problems lies in the development department, not the legal system. The level-upon-level construction of hundreds of NES side-perspective shooters cripples replayability and increases vulnerability to rental burnout.

The best way to fix this is to diversify the types of games and to give more weight to the needs of the players when calibrating play elements and skill settings.

I realize that sounds like the most obvious prescription, but that doesn't make it any less effective. It is shocking how many game companies don't think beyond impressing chain store buyers during the two-minute product demo.

Preteen gamers dominated the 8-bit video-game market, but electronic gaming must reach beyond this enthusiastic segment to escape the stigma of being only for kids. To firmly establish and perpetuate the hobby of electronic gaming, companies must take a long-term view and not alienate customers with games they can't play or that don't deliver the promised entertainment value.

The Game Genie may hurt the 8-bit NES in the short run, but what it represents can only improve video gaming over the long haul. The temporary twists it puts on a cartridge may cause designers and developers to grimace occasionally, but everyone is sure to benefit from the way it, and similar devices bound to follow it onto store shelves, will broaden the hobby's accessibility.

COMPUTER ART BY BRIAN SPIELVOGEL

# Dusk of the Gods

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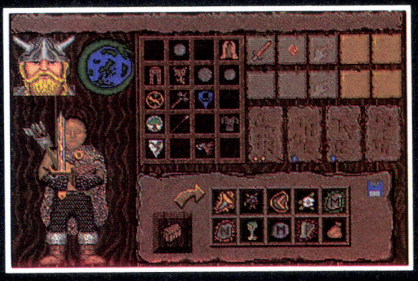

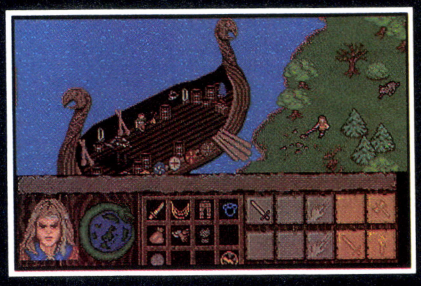

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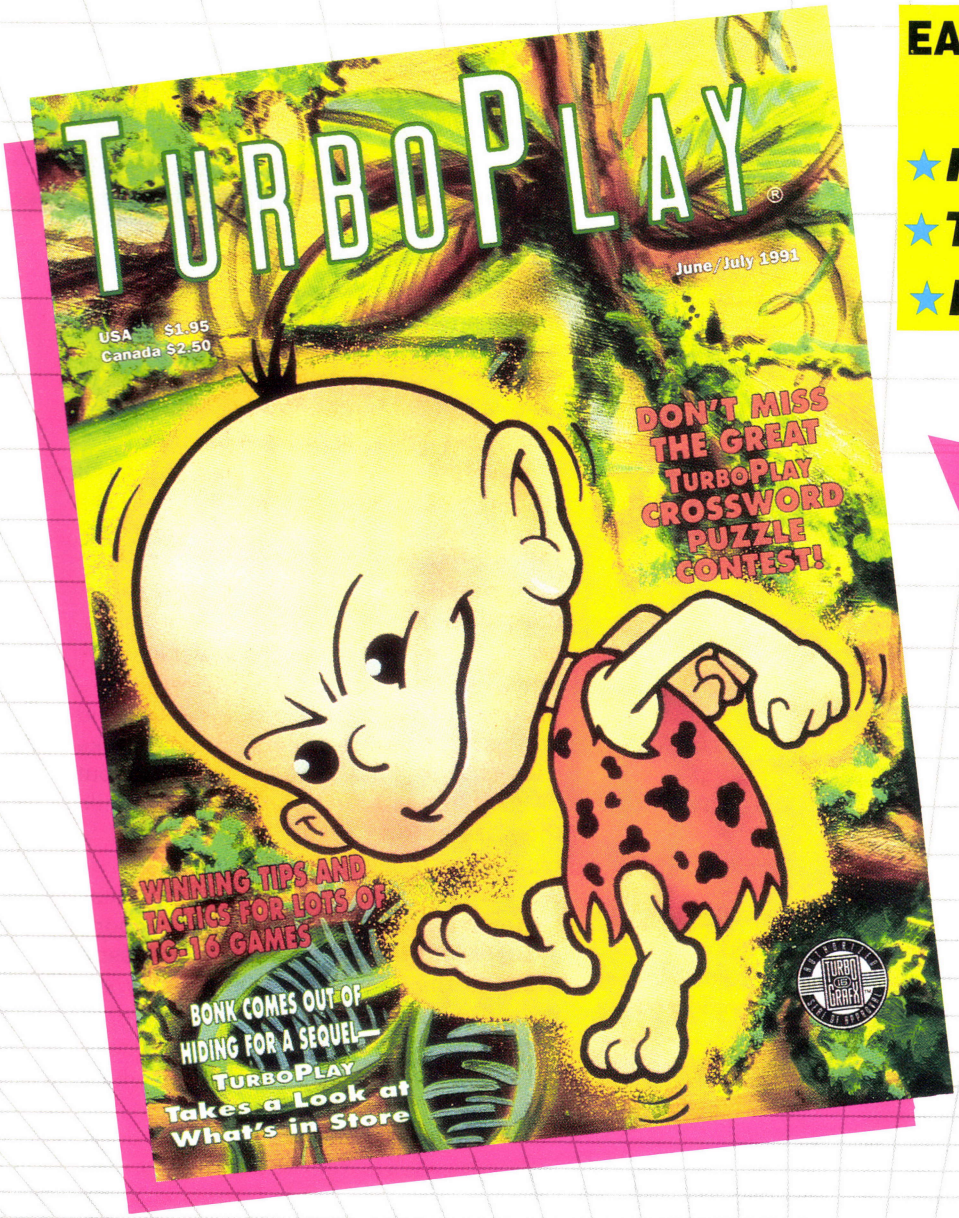


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The player, as the absolute despot of the Epsilon solar system, made a troubling discovery while experimenting with a hyperdrive portal. Apparently his meddling permanently linked four alien dimensions to the Epsilon system, each with its own buffer zone of barren planets. Realizing that these planets could be used to stockpile supplies for an eventual invasion of the Epsilon system, the gamer sets out on the offensive against each of the four alien races in turn (resources preclude engaging more than one at a time).

Such is the fictional background for *Overlord*. Based on the inevitable reality that all great empires are built on their economies (i.e., armies can't march on an empty stomach), *Overlord* focuses players on an increasingly complex economic model that in many ways dictates the military strategy.

Resource management is the key to winning. One must closely monitor levels of food, energy, minerals, fuel, credits and people on each of the planets controlled. All ships and equipment can only be purchased from the star base. In the first system, all that is necessary to buy ships is money, which can be "wired" instantaneously to the star base from the outlying colonies. In the remaining systems, however, it becomes necessary to pay for these purchases with minerals and energy, which must be transported back to the star base on a cargo carrier.

Money is generated from taxation and has an inverse affect on population growth. The army is drafted from civilians and for the purposes of the game does not consume resources like the general population. Thus, one can draw the population down in times of a food shortage by recruiting some platoons, up to a maximum of 24. This cap on army size becomes increasingly important in the later scenarios, which feature greater numbers of planets. It becomes impossible to garrison all of one's assets, so every decision is critical, and second-guessing the enemy becomes the order of the day.

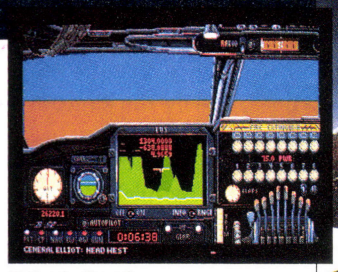
The opponents vary greatly in terms of resources as well as strategic acumen. The first is Wotok, leader of a simian race that relies primarily on physical rather than mental ability. He is relatively easy to defeat, since he invades at random as opposed to targeting the richest planets. The gamer should format and develop two planets quickly, before beginning to build armies. Establish a sound economy, rake cash back to the star base often, then put 24 platoons in training all at once. While they are getting ready, build five battle cruisers to transport all but the four who will remain at the star base. Equip these troops with the best armor and weapons available for the cash on hand, and send them to the enemy star base. This approach will often catch Wotok off-guard and lead to a quick defeat.

**Virgin Games' *Overlord* may lack in the graphics department, but compensates for it in terms of replay value.**

The mechanics of *Overlord* are smooth and simple. Most of the action takes place around a central screen, with icon control of all the major functions and hot-key icons to jump between the sub-screens. This is important because everything occurs in real time.

The graphics are nicely rendered but essentially static,

# BIG, BAD, AND ARMED TO THE TEETH.



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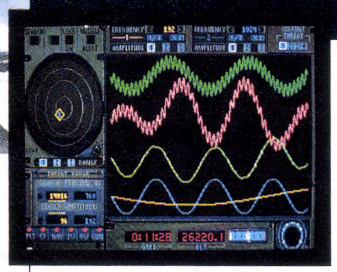

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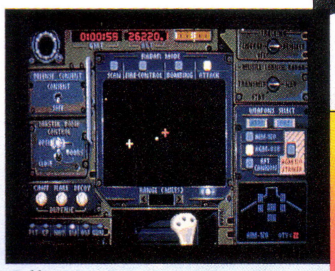

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save for a couple of animation windows on the combat screen and planet-formatting section.

What *Overlord* lacks in flash is more than compensated for in terms of replay value. This is a hot little offering with a lot of bang for the buck!

—Ed Dille

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| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |

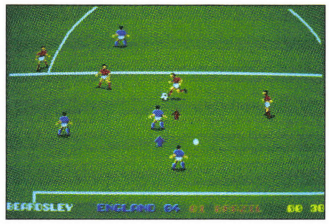
Real soccer fans will get a tremendous kick when they boot this exceptionally detailed simulation of the planet's favorite team sport. This joystick-driven action-strategy contest replicates the 24-team tournament of the 1990 World Cup. The World Cup is the sport's crowning event. One or two computerists can play a single match, set up a tournament or play through the entire World Cup competition ladder.

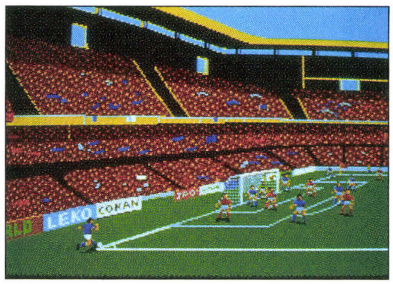
*World Class Soccer* incorporates real teams, complete with the players actually nominated for the 1990 World Cup. The program rates each athlete on a one-to-five scale in four attributes: Skill measures overall ability; speed governs how fast the player moves across the screen in response to joystick commands; strength determines distance when the gamer kicks (accomplished by pressing the action button); and aggression indicates propensity toward rough tackling and drawing penalties. The statistics influence how the player performs, although the computerist's reflexes and ability to implement savvy soccer strategy are also decisive factors.

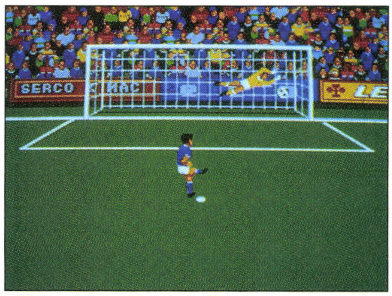
The joystick control is excellent, and the players really zip up and down the vertically scrolling soccer pitch. The stick handles movement, while the action button sets the strength and heading of kicks. Well-drawn, though static, cut scenes portray special situations like goal kicks and penalty calls.

The instruction book is specially designed for America, though it was obviously written in the United Kingdom. Some stateside input might have disclosed areas that needed even more emphasis as well as sharpened the idioms of the manuscript. It includes rosters and exhaustive descriptions of each of the 24 teams and profiles of many individual World Cup superstars. It could have used a set of strategic hints to ease U.S. players into the unfamiliar environment.

**U.S. Gold's *World Class Soccer* incorporates real teams, complete with the players actually nominated for the 1990 World Cup.**







The rule book doesn't devote much space to describing game play, and this is a handicap. *World Class Soccer* is simple to learn in that there are few things to memorize, but the play is so rapid that it could overwhelm the novice for a game or two. It also makes no sense to put the command summary on the back of the poster. If the picture isn't good enough to hang, why bother to put it into the box? And if it is good enough, why bury important information on the back side?

This Dave Healey design lacks some features American gamers would ordinarily expect to find in such a game. There is no provision for trading players between teams, nor is there any way to create a customized squad. The pre-game option screen allows the user to set game length, but the omission of a way to adjust the computerized adversary's skill level makes *World Class Soccer* very frustrating for novice or less talented coaches.

The opening of this review referred to "real soccer fans," and that is certainly the crucial phrase. Americans, in general, aren't very knowledgeable about soccer, and this program demands some soccer expertise. Imagine a Londoner trying to play the stat-influenced action mode of *Earl Weaver Baseball*. With the World Cup coming to the United States in 1994, *World Class Soccer* may be the most enjoyable way for sports fans to bridge the information gap in time to enjoy the tournament.

—Arnie Katz

U.S. Gold
550 S. Winchester Blvd., Suite 200
San Jose, CA 95128
(408) 246-6607

## Elite+

**MICROPLAY**

**Version: IBM PC $39.95**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **6** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |

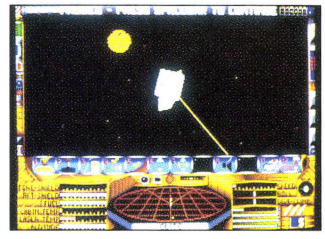
*Elite+* takes a good look at what intergalactic trading would be like if the player

never went to a planet and instead traded entirely from the ship. It combines fighting skill with business sense to provide an enjoyable, if sometimes frustrating, space environment.

The objective is to achieve elite status by amassing thousands of credits and shooting down opposing spacecraft. As the money rolls in, the ship can be modified into a high-tech trading/warfare starship.

Modifications depend on the chosen way of life. A new starship commander may be a simple hard-working trader (a slow-but-honest way to earn credits), a bounty hunter (high-yield, but a very dangerous line of work) or a space pirate (gains the most in the shortest time but definitely the most risky career path).

The trader must look at the type of planet (industrial or agricultural) he visits and stock the appropriate goods to meet its needs. An industrial planet wants agricultural goods, obviously, and an agricultural planet needs to obtain machinery. To get the most profit, the trader should buy from a poor planet, then sell to a rich one. Each planet maintains its own space station; these stations are neutral and can't be destroyed.



***Elite+* combines fighting skill with business sense to provide an enjoyable, if sometimes frustrating, space environment.**

The planets also have varying governments. Some are relatively safe democracies, with few pirate problems. Others are anarchies with pirates running rampant. Some governments, such as dictatorships, may not mind the trader providing some pirate control.

In the long run, the trader has to deal with all types of worlds to achieve his goals. There are eight galaxies, each with more than a hundred systems. Life-forms vary, ranging from felines, amphiboids, bird forms and insects, and each has distinct differences and needs.

Honest trading requires a lot of patience and isn't as much fun as the more dangerous lifestyles. Bounty hunters roam the galaxies, seeking out and destroying pirates for reward.

Pirates have the most fun. They destroy and loot as many ships as possible while dealing in weapons, narcotics and slaves. These are all illegal, which keeps the profit high and the pirate's life short but exciting. As the player becomes more dangerous, other traders put a price on his head. He becomes the prey of other bounty hunters and wanted by the space police.

Although additions for the ship come faster to a pirate, survival keeps him on his toes. It requires more fighting skills than trading, and, therefore, modifications to the ship have to be to the weaponry.

The graphics could use improvement, but in the thick of battle, when you're involved in hyper-action, it's easy to overlook any shortcomings. The view screen is dominated by status screens, trading, ship equipment and maps. Planets and suns are rather lackluster; just solid blobs of color (green for the planets, yellow for the suns). The cockpit view, with the equipment, is more attractive than the outside views.

Joystick play is so good *Elite+* seems like a fine flight simulator. Keyboard and mouse play are slightly less responsive, but still provide good ship handling. The audio portion of the program is disappointing. The opening theme doesn't quite fit the mood. Worse, there is no other music in the game, only sound effects that are also inadequate.

*Elite+* provides an addictive combination of fighting and trading to hold the player's interest. It might not appeal to every gamer, but it's a grabber for anyone who likes a good space simulation.

—David Ethell

MicroProse
180 Lakefront Drive
Hunt Valley, MD 21030
(301) 771-1151

## Rotox

**U.S. GOLD**
**Versions: Amiga ($39.95), IBM PC ($39.95)**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **6** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |

*Rotox* is an exciting game with graphic twists that make it unusual. It does have some flaws, primarily in the control scheme and the copy protection, but it has an interesting concept coupled with challenging action that make it fun to play.

*Rotox* casts the gamer in the part of a cyborg (a mechanical man with a human brain). The goal is to survive ten levels of obstacle courses set up as a test environment. The levels have such fun names as "auto city," "invader" and the ever-popular "death." Each has obstacles consistent with its name—for example, the auto city

level is made up of a variety of old vehicles, while the "eco" level is infested with mutated life forms.

Each level is made up of nine adjoining areas. To move to the next level, the player must purge all nine segments of enemy life forms. Some of these can't be reached until the others are clear, so there is strategy involved in cleaning up each level.

*Rotox* is primarily an arcade game with a simple objective—blast everything in sight. The gamer starts with a low-powered laser, but there are more powerful weapons, as well as a jet pack, available.

The enemy life forms are inventive and well-animated, although the graphics of the landscape itself are not very detailed. The view is from above, and the controls permit the cyborg to move forward and backward, as well as rotate. There's one strange twist on the graphic treatment: When the player rotates the cyborg, he stays still and the landscape moves around him. This is a little disorienting at first.

It is important to master the art of guiding the cyborg, because missteps are so costly. An accidental step off a platform makes the cyborg fall through to another version of that level—with a resulting loss in energy. When the energy level falls to zero, one of your three lives is lost.

There is plenty of information available on the screen, including energy level, a map of the cleared segments of each level, score, weapons status and a radar scanner that indicates the direction of oncoming enemies. Pay close attention to this radar scanner—some of the enemies come in fast, and you can't see much of the area around you on-screen.

The PC version does not support a joystick or mouse; all control is from the keyboard. This problem is compounded by the fact that the keys selected seem strange and awkward—the *A* and *Q* keys control forward/back, while the *O* and *P* keys control rotation. The game does not support the arrow keys, nor can the gamer reconfigure key assignments to make them more comfortable.

The copy protection also presents some difficulty. Each time the game is started, a segment of a level is displayed on the screen for the player to identify. The levels are detailed in the instruction manual; however, the quality of the printing is so poor that it is extremely difficult to figure out which segment is shown.

Worse, the PC version has a bug. Normally when you accidentally step off the edge of a segment and fall through, the cyborg lands in the solid area of the level below. However, a misstep off one of the narrow catwalks brings a killing problem. The cyborg lands on the level below and falls again and again until all the energy is gone, and a game life expires. There's no way to prevent this, and it's extremely frustrating. So be really careful on the catwalks.

*Rotox* has a pleasant concept and plenty of action. It's too bad that some small problems in its execution distract so much from what could have been a blastathon for arcaders.

—David Plotkin

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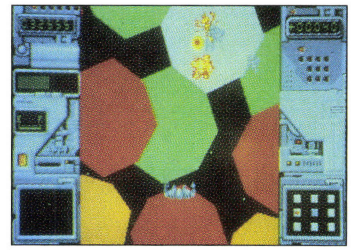
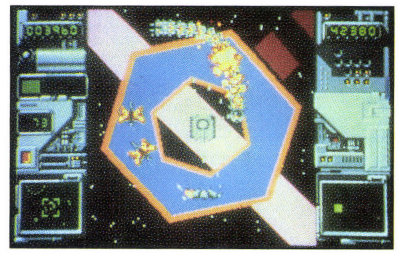
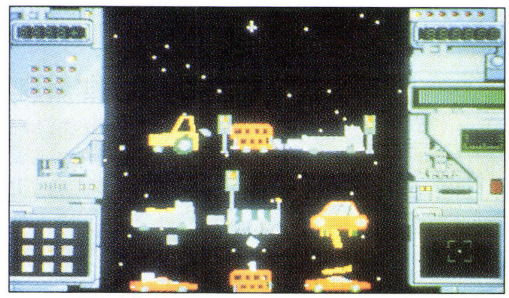
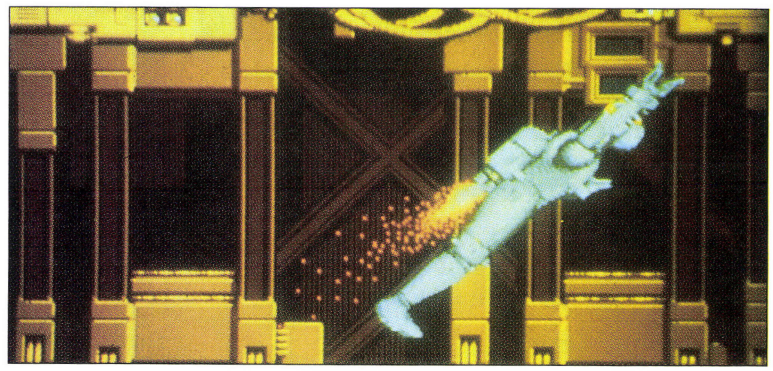








***Rotox* is primarily an arcade game with a simple objective—blast everything in sight.**

## Fast Eddie's Pool

**0XXI**

**Version: Amiga ($34.95)**

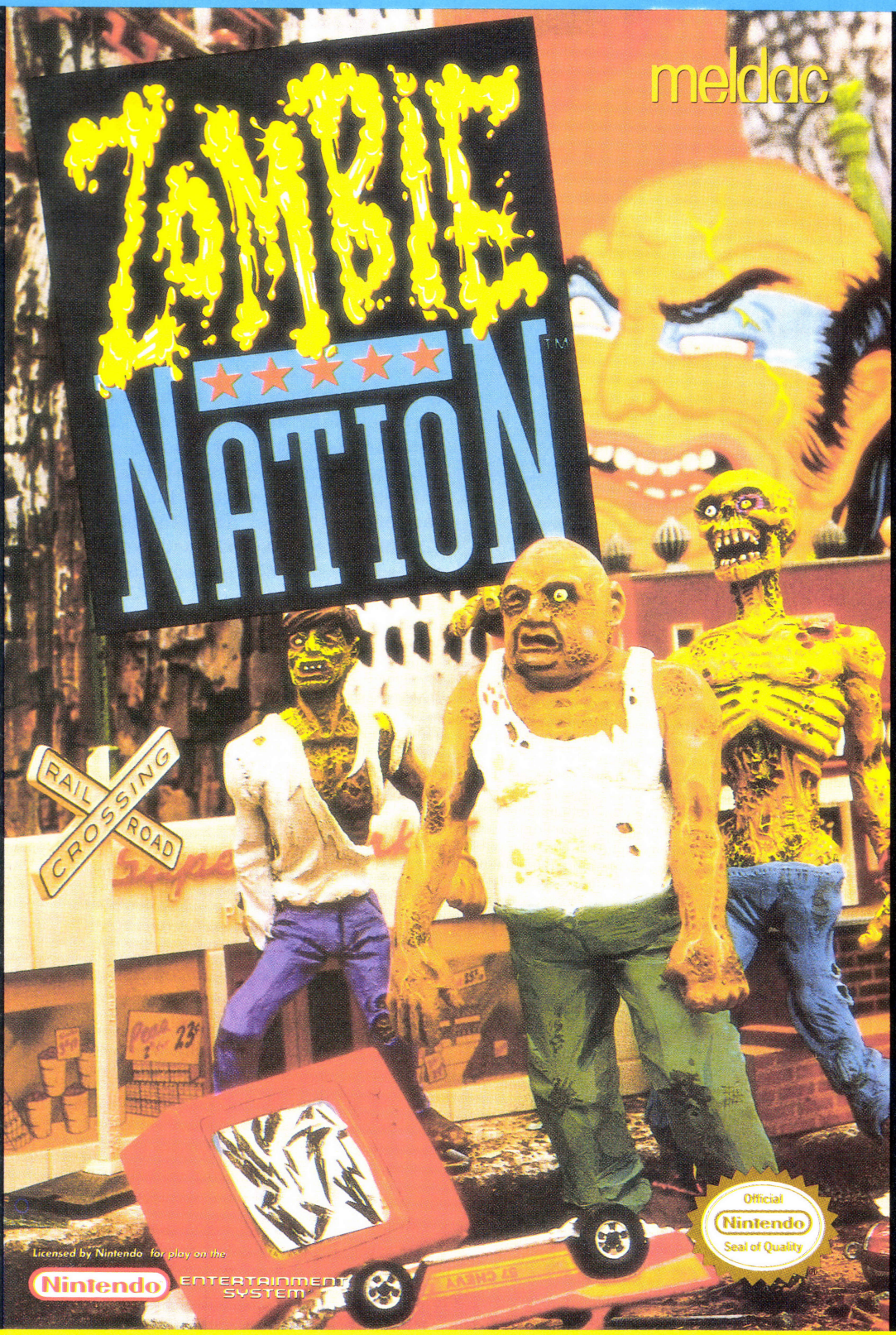
| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **6** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |

*Fast Eddie's Pool* is a billiards game that features no less than 13 different contests. While there are pool programs that are done better, the variety of games available makes this one worth a look.

*Fast Eddie's Pool* opens with a view of a pool room complete with several different kinds of tables, Fast Eddie himself, a jukebox, cue racks and other paraphernalia, all in well-rendered drawings. The gamer uses the mouse pointer to select what to do. For example, clicking on the jukebox toggles the music on and off. Clicking on Fast Eddie elicits some comments, although these are only on the screen—Fast Eddie doesn't actually make any noise. There is even an arcade game that plays a passable round of *Missile Command*.

The real heart of the game is the series of pool tables. Clicking on one of these allows you to select from games that are

# THE ZOMBIES ARE COMING!!!!




By I. C. GOOLS, Times Staff Writer

NEW YORK--What appeared to be a harmless meteorite crashing in the Nevada desert has turned out to be Darc Seed, an evil alien creature with horrible powers. By shooting strange rays, Darc Seed has turned the helpless nation into zombie slaves.

Mayor Heminhaw immediately called an emergency press conference where he read the following prepared statement. "I um, er,ah, I am doing everything, ah, er, humanly possible to see to it that ah, this situation er, um, this terrible situation ah, comes to a ah, ahem, a swift and , er, um, um, a swift and um, satisfactory close.

## Ground Shaking NES Action

Zombie Nation is a ground shaking action/shooting game for the NES. The object of the game is to wreak total destruction on everything you see (it's a dark and dirty job, but somebody's got to do it). Meanwhile, you need to rescue as many zombie hostages as you can in order to gain enough strength for the ultimate showdown with Darc Seed (he's toast!).

## Devastating Graphics and Pounding Sound

Zombie Nation's graphics are so devastatingly realistic you'll almost be tempted not to demolish them (yeah right!). And the relentlessly pounding sound effects will make you feel like you're right in the middle of the action hammering away at skyscrapers, mountains, and everything else that crosses your path. So don't just stand there like a Zombie, get your copy now!

Distributed by Meldac of America, Inc. 1801Century Park East Suite 2210, Los Angeles, CA. 90067 (213) 286-7040

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# ZOMBIE ★ NATION

CIRCLE #144 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

appropriate to that table. Selections include 15-ball, cutthroat, 6/8/9 ball, bumper pool, snooker and standard billiards. If you're unsure of the rules for a particular game, select "help" for a brief description of how to play. Each game can be customized. You can change the table color, how fast the table is, skill level of your opponent, ball material (including Velcro, which behaves weirdly) and options, such as whether to show ball numbers, ball paths and shadows of balls.

Making a shot is a little tricky. The mouse sets the direction of the shot by moving an on-screen cue stick. Once the cue stick is placed, you must press the mouse button and hold it down. While you are holding it down, you can move an indicator that selects how much spin to put on the ball. There is an indicator that shows how hard the ball will be hit. This indicator constantly grows and shrinks; the player must release the mouse button to hit the ball when the indicator is the proper size. As I said, tricky, but not really difficult.

Overall, *Fast Eddie's Pool* seems to be pretty accurate as far as physics go. There is a minor glitch in the bumper pool game—if your opponent accidentally sinks his ball in his own pocket, your closest ball is also relocated—which is not how bumper pool works.

The graphics, while nicely drawn, certainly don't tax the computer's abilities, nor is the sound anything special. Nevertheless, for anyone interested in a wide range of pool games, this package has a lot to offer.

—D. P.

Oxxi
P.O. Box 90309
Long Beach, CA 90809
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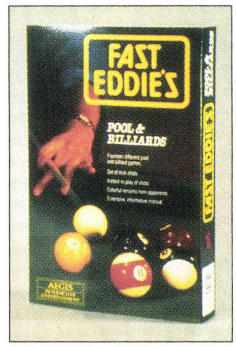



**Fast Eddie's Pool is a billiards game that features no less than 13 different contests.**

## Where in America's Past Is Carmen Sandiego?

**BRØDERBUND**

**Version: IBM PC ($59.95)**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | **9** | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |

Computer games rarely teach players really useful information. How many people must deal with trolls or fly combat missions in the real world? Yet even the idea of education in a computer game turns off a lot of people. This is no longer true. Since Brøderbund introduced their charming anti-heroine *Carmen Sandiego*, the series has entertained millions of players while sneaking in real educational value. It's impossible not to learn something from a game that artfully weaves tidbits of information into the plot.

*Carmen* games are mysteries in which the player must investigate the theft of landmarks, historical treasures and other cultural artifacts by *Carmen Sandiego* or members of her gang of thieves. Through a series of clues, players follow the crook from location to location to gather data and narrow down the suspects. The detective enters facts such as hair color, favorite artist and favorite hobby into the game's computer and requests a list of matches. If there is only one match to the data, the computer issues a warrant for the arrest of the criminal. Then the player only has to find the next location of the suspect to arrest him or her and solve the mystery.

*Where in America's Past Is Carmen Sandiego?* is the latest and best of the popular series. It combines an intuitive interface with impressive graphics and background music. It's important that it's so easy to play *Carmen* games because players must spend time looking for information in the guide books instead of struggling with the interface.

Examples of stolen objects include the Statue of Liberty, the first gold nugget from the California Gold Rush, the "Star-Spangled Banner," the Golden Gate Bridge and Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address." Examples of clues are facts like the thief mentioned that he wanted to talk to Zebulon Pike, the thief wanted to watch the first space shuttle take off and the thief planned to visit Salem during the witch trials. To follow up clues, players consult a book, *What Happened When?* The most interesting volume included in any of the *Carmen* games so far, it's an American history guide organized by year and topic. It's remarkably easy to use.

*Where in America's Past Is Carmen Sandiego?* uses a slick, updated version of the series interface, then adds a few more features that take it beyond the previous games. The game screen is a control screen for the time-travel device that tracks the thieves. It shows a picture of something from the time period in which the player lands and provides some descriptive text on the right. The pictures are

**This time around, Carmen Sandiego and her gang are being chased through American history.**

impressive scanned artwork or photographs.

Along the bottom of the screen are four buttons (search, records, map and launch) controlled by mouse, joystick or keyboard control. Search gathers clues at a location; records accesses the game computer and dossiers on the crooks; map is used for destination selection; and launch sends the player off to the chosen time period and location. With five regions and nine time zones, *America's Past* stretches a long way.

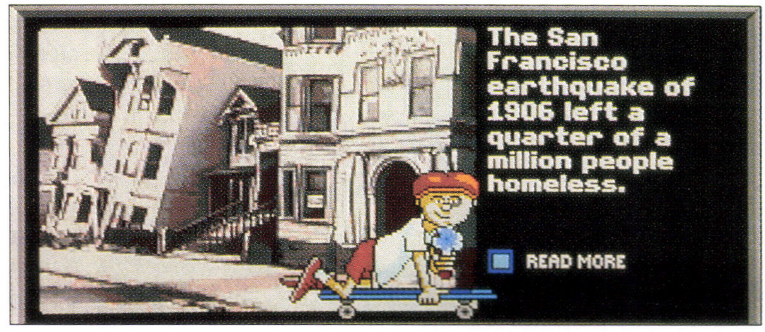
*America's Past* features digitized sounds and ambient music throughout each round of play. The game supports all major sound boards and can be effortlessly installed on a hard disk.

Brøderbund certainly didn't skimp on the documentation. The software package weighs in at a hefty two pounds because of the book and other support materials. The game manual looks like a colonial newspaper, and there are even nifty trading cards of the crooks. Another plus is that the package includes both 5.25" and 3.5" disks.

*Where in America's Past Is Carmen Sandiego?* should keep people entertained as long as they want to play. This really is not just for kids; it's fun, informative and well worth the travels through time.

The real question is, where will Carmen Sandiego pop up next?

—Russ Ceccola



***Where in America's Past Is Carmen Sandiego?* uses a slick, updated version of the series interface, then adds a few more features that take it beyond the previous *Carmen* games.**

Brøderbund
17 Paul Drive
San Rafael, CA 94903-2101
(415) 492-3200

## Pro Tennis Tour 2

**UBI SOFT**

**Versions: Amiga ($49.95), IBM PC ($49.95)**

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |

Computerized tennis games pop up again and again, despite (or maybe because of) the fact that it is very difficult to accurately simulate a game with so many variables involved. The biggest problem is how the player controls the on-screen character. Some games require the player to move his or her character back and forth on the court as well as accurately hit the ball. Others only concentrate on the chore of returning the tennis ball over the net. *Pro Tennis Tour 2* leaves that choice of complexity up to the player, with a tennis system that's very simple to learn but as hard to master as the real game. Strong graphics and sound effects round out the contest to make it a necessity for any tennis enthusiast.

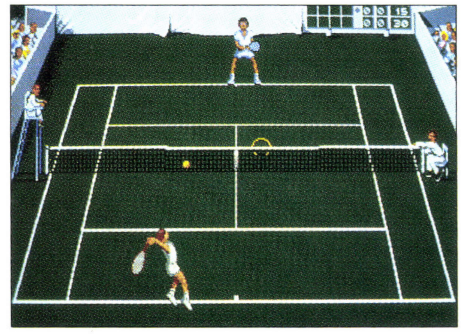
It only takes comparison with the first *Pro Tennis Tour* to really appreciate the sequel. The first program's tournament play pitted the gamer against others to capture the title. The tournament system was nice, but few players actually had a chance to take a stab at the title because the game was too hard to play.

The difference in game play is immediately noticeable in *Pro Tennis Tour 2*. In the original game, the player had little chance of beating the computer. *Pro Tennis Tour 2* requires skill from a player, not the whims of a difficult game, for a player to win a match.

The sequel also contains an updated interface, ball machine for practice and the ability to put together your own player from different skills. Role-playing in tennis? Absolutely! And it works; there's a noticeable difference between on-screen racketeers with varied skill attributes.

The main menu of *Pro Tennis Tour 2* offers a chance to modify game preferences and choices like a friendly match, character information, the ball machine or tournament play. It's best to use the ball machine for some practice games before entering a tournament (fun in itself). The junior and average skill levels only require the player to master ball return, but the character-skill level calls for movement of the player around the court. This extra control is realistic, but learn how to hit the ball first.

***Pro Tennis Tour 2* has an improved interface, and is simple to learn, but hard to master.**



The tournament mode of the game puts a player through a rigorous season: He or she can get money and possibly go for the Davis Cup. To get far in the season takes a lot of practice. Games are scheduled on a pop-up calendar in tournament

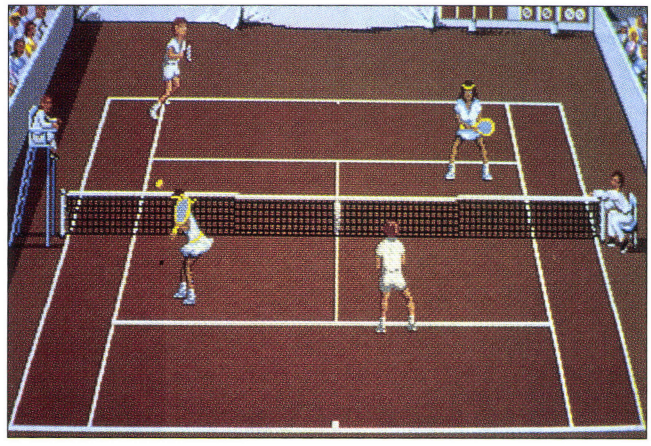
play. Wins move the compu-player through the season, netting him or her money and a ranking on the way.

In tournament play, it is important to create a character to complement your real-life abilities. This is done by assigning points (à la role-playing games) to eight tennis skills such as forehand, backhand, smash and service. Tweaking these measures can correct inadequacies so the on-screen ego really storms over the opposition.

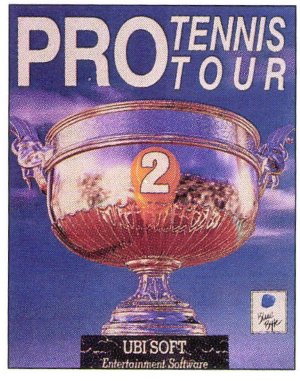
The ball machine in *Pro Tennis Tour 2* is helpful in teaching how to return balls. Graphics and sound effects are nice; they are true enough to reality to help line up shots. The animation of the players is fluid, and the game speed is appropriate.

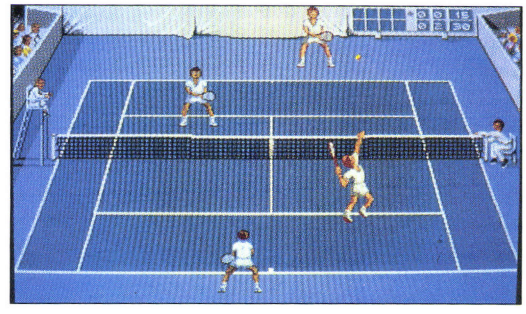
*Pro Tennis Tour 2*, with its new features, updated graphics and sounds, plus vastly improved game play, is the nicest tennis simulation available. Now if I could only make it to Wimbledon!

—R. C.



**Pro Tennis Tour 2 requires skill from a player, not the whims of a difficult game, for a player to win a match.**



UBI Soft
15 Atwood Ave.
Sausalito, CA 94965
(415) 332-8749

## F29 Retaliator

**OCEAN**

**Versions: Amiga ($49.95), Atari ST ($49.95), IBM PC ($49.95)**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |

There are so many flight simulations flooding the PC market, it takes a rare program to stand out in the crowd. *F29 Retaliator* is that rarity, with features that put it a step ahead of the competition.

Players start by choosing a pilot rank from four designations that determine the complexity and difficulty of battle. There's also a choice between the advanced tactical fighter (ATF) F-22 and the forward swept Wing F-29. Mission control offers over 100 scenarios, ranging from practice missions in the deserts of Arizona to the thick of things in Europe or the Middle East.

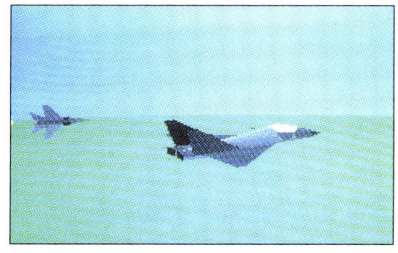
Once you're assigned a mission, players select weapons to carry for the job ahead. This is tricky; it requires memorization of all the missile abbreviations. (It's almost impossible to look up each one under combat circumstances.) There's one help; a wise pilot will read up on the upcoming mission in the handbook that accompanies the program and choose an arsenal accordingly.

The graphics on the selection screens are easy to watch. Every screen is well-thought-out and beautifully presented.

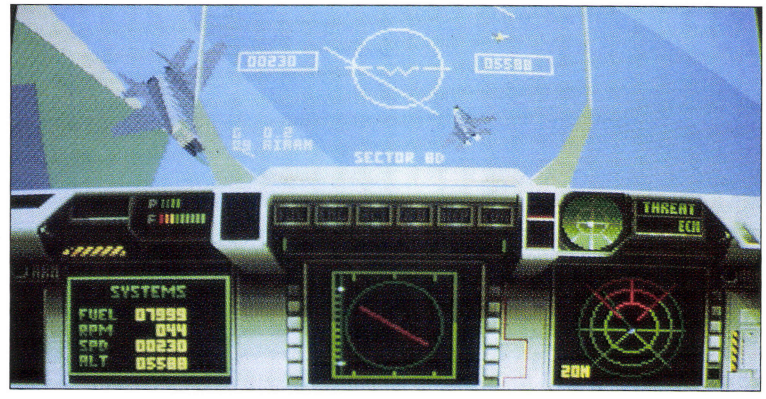
The real treat comes, however, when pilots get airborne. Gamers see the action from the cockpit and can switch viewing angles to every window. There are even multiple satellite views of the enemy available for study.

Smooth scrolling and attention to detail in the flight sequences give *F29 Retaliator* a clear edge over most other games of this type. Gone are the featureless floor grid and the polygon fighters. Instead, mountains, bridges and detailed buildings dot the landscapes, not to mention the intricate aircraft that are there for the pilot to blast away. Every possible action presents the player with a thoughtful graphical representation or a wild sound effect. This game will give your PC a real workout if it's equipped with an Ad Lib or Sound Blaster board to produce wind and machine gun noises, as well as the scream of the missiles as they launch.

**Ocean's F29 Retaliator makes it a treat to get airborne, offering a variety of views from the plane you're piloting.**



The only bad side to *F29 Retaliator* is that it's not really a "sit-down-and-play" type of game. There are over 46 different keys to maneuver while flying. The weapons are numerous, and the abbreviations are difficult to memo-



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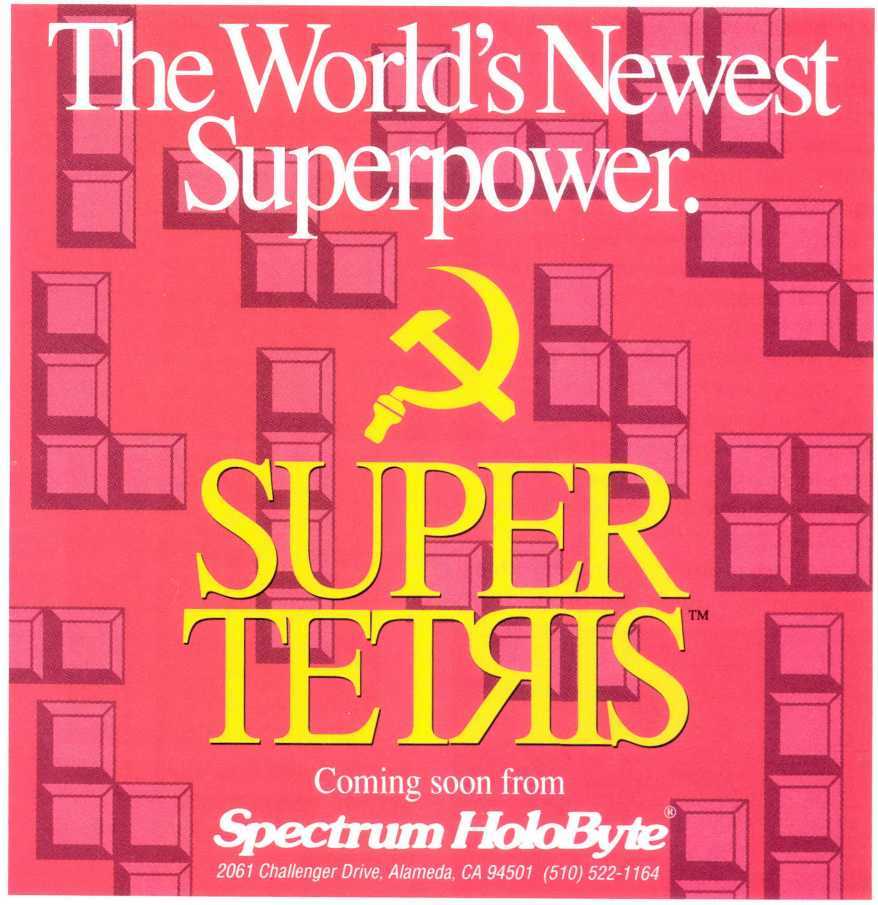


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rize. The instruments are equally intricate and difficult to master.

No one ever said that flying an F29 was going to be easy. But gamers who take the trouble to learn the controls will find their time was well spent.

—Frank Tetro, Jr.

Electronic Arts
1820 Gateway Drive
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 572-ARTS

## Battlestorm

**TITUS SOFTWARE**
**Versions: Amiga ($49.95), Atari ST ($49.95), CDTV ($44.95), IBM PC ($49.95)**

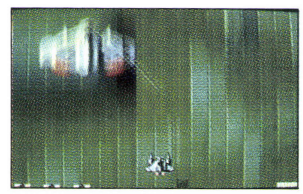
| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | **9** | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | **8** | 9 | 10 |

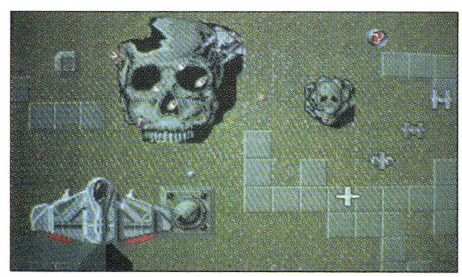
Titus Software's latest release into the computer-game field is *Battlestorm*, a quick-action, smooth-scrolling arcade game that features multidirectional scrolling and a large number of objects on the screen at once.

Though there is obviously a background story, Titus doesn't waste space on it in the manual. Instead the story is presented through a series of animated sequences shown before and after each level. The story is basically the standard for action fare: Free the galaxy by blowing up all the capital ships, and then destroy the big bad guy who inhabits the area at the very end of each phase. Destroying the final bad guy earns the player the praise of all creatures in the galaxy.

The game's graphics and animation are very impressive, fully living up to the quality of other action games. The large play field scrolls smoothly, even with lots of items on the screen at once. The sound effects and background music fit into the game and complement play.

*Battlestorm* features four action levels. The practice run gives the gamer an invincible ship, but only allows play on the first level of the game. The three remaining gradually increase the speed of the ship, the aggressiveness of the enemies and the number of shots they fire. The highest level is very difficult and should challenge even the most adept joystick jockey.





***Battlestorm* is a very sharp arcade game that's fairly easy to learn, but very tough to master.**

The biggest limitation of *Battlestorm* is the fact it only has four levels. However, each is split into two phases. The first uses the multidimensional scrolling indicated earlier, while the second is a vertically scrolling segment with the obligatory big nasty at the end. Though it may take a while to master the basic mechanics, even those without super action skills can quickly overcome all but the final level. It would have been nice to have a few more levels to explore and conquer.

*Battlestorm* is a very sharp arcade game that's fairly easy to learn, but very tough to master. One good point about the limited number of levels to conquer is that the game can be enjoyed even by those who don't usually master every twitch contest. This does make it more appealing. Though the theme is very characteristic of the genre, there is enough charm in *Battlestorm* for anyone who wants to add a quality shoot-'em-up to their collection.

—R. Bradley Andrews

Titus
20432 Corisco St.
Chatsworth, CA 91311
(818) 709-3692

## Mario Andretti's Racing Challenge

**ELECTRONIC ARTS**
**Version: IBM PC ($49.95)**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Life is a trade-off; what it gives us with one hand, it takes away with the other. Take, for example, *Mario Andretti's Racing Challenge*. This eagerly awaited omnibus auto-racing simulation from Distinctive Software (best know for the first two *Test Drive* games) offers some truly impressive frills and options. For example, computerists can race in sprint cars, modifieds, stock cars, prototype vehicles, Formula One machines and Indy-style autos. There are also ten different tracks, pit stop

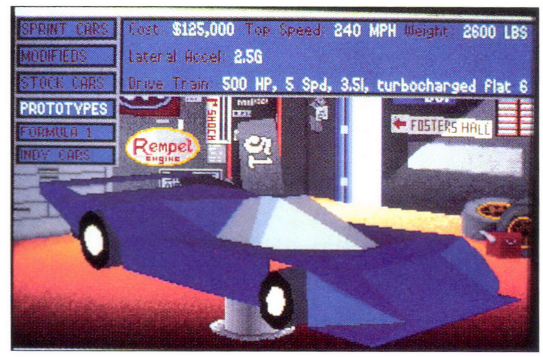
action, racing circuits, payoffs and instant replays.

On the other hand, the actual racing sequences are not *quite* up to the standards set by EA's last race car simulation, *Indianapolis 500—The Simulation*, which was developed by the Papyrus Design Group. Even with the graphics set on maximum detail, one sometimes gets the sense of racing in an open field in comparison to the gorgeous track sequences that were seen in the earlier game. Whether or not the extras in the game compensate for this slight deficiency is a matter of personal taste.

*Mario Andretti's Racing Challenge* begins by offering the user a menu of options. They can begin a new circuit, save or restore games in progress or practice. The very useful practice option allows the player to try out any of the six vehicle types on any available track. (Although there are ten different tracks, not all of them race all types of cars.)

Once the practicing is over, the gamer must select a sponsor (by typing a name) and start on the circuit with a Sprint car: a stripped-down, short haul speed machine. The available tracks are then displayed in beautiful, animated, angled top-down perspective. Once a site is chosen, the actual racing begins, with the winners collecting cash prizes that are subsequently used to buy ever-more-formidable vehicles.

The racing sequences combine the now-standard, behind-the-dashboard, first-person perspective with a top-down radar-style map of the course and relevant information on the car being driven




***Mario Andretti's Racing Challenge* is the omnibus auto-racing simulation from DSI—designers of the first two *Test Drive* games.**

(cost, top speed, weight, lateral acceleration and drive train data). The radar map is a necessary addition, since it's so easy to get spun around on these tracks, and the lack of visual detail often makes it otherwise impossible to determine in which direction the car is currently pointing. Unfortunately, the designers chose to represent the user's vehicle with a dark blue dot on a black line drawing of the track, making it very difficult to spot at a glance.

The gamer can set the level of visual detail on races, and there are six camera angles for viewing replays. The game also adds pit stops to the proceedings, giving

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the user a menu of options including tire changes and refueling.

—Bill Kunkel

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## Xenocide

**MICRO REVELATIONS, INC.**
**Versions: Apple IIGS ($49.95), IBM PC ($44.95)**

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| SOUND/MUSIC | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | **5** | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| GRAPHICS | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **6** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| PLAYABILITY | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | **7** | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | **6** | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Well, there goes the neighborhood!

Here you are, living happily in the Cire-Alto solar system, when who should show up but the slathering, reptilian xenomorphs, who, incidentally, were banished from their home world for numerous, not to mention distasteful, crimes. What's worse? Cire-Alto is neutral and has no defenses!

After massacring the citizens on one of the system's helpless planets, the xenomorphs are now hungrily scoping out Argenia, which is the home planet of the user's surrogate character. The first phase of the invasion consisted of the xenomorphs occupying Argenia's three moons, where they have established a base of operations.

Your player-character is now the system's sole remaining hope. The player must gather together as many weapons as possible, then embark on a mission to destroy the three moons, lest all of Cire-Alto be turned into lizard chow.

***Xenocide*, by Micro Revelations, is a considerable improvement over most action-oriented games of this variety.**

*Xenocide* mixes a variety of visual presentations (first person, side-scrolling and top-down) to produce a generic-looking multiphase action strategy contest. There are four levels of play on each moon, starting first with the hovercraft sequence, which uses a first-person, pseudo 3-D perspective. The gamer must navigate the hovercraft to a location that provides access to the moon's underground caverns while avoiding or incinerating the large, squishy space bugs that infest the lunar surface. Running into a space bug causes it to be squashed against the windshield, obscuring the view and certainly doing the hovercraft no good.

The second level is set in the moon's sub-surface caves, where the player-character dons a jet pack and uses a variety of weapons and shields to survive the weird creatures and booby traps that exist in this subterranean nether world. The object of this side-scrolling scenario is to locate the five bombs that are required to blow up this moon.

Level 3 is similar to the preceding level, except that the player-character maneuvers underwater in hopes of locating the keys and access points to the xenomorphs' underground headquarters. At the conclusion of this scenario, the player-character then gains access to the aliens' Bio Lab.

The Bio Lab sequence is presented in top-down perspective, with the player-character battling through the hoards of xenomorphs who inhabit its mazelike corridors. The goal: Reach the central core, where you must plant the five bombs then battle back to the teleporter before the entire moon goes boom. This four-stage process is then repeated on the remaining two Argenian moons.

*Xenocide*, which was programmed and codesigned by Brian Greenstone, offers crisp, if uninspired, graphics, smooth scrolling and some nice strategic nuances. It's a long way from representing state-of-the-art, but it's also a considerable improvement over most action-oriented games of this type.

—B. K.

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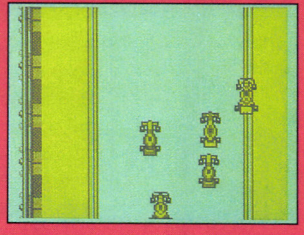

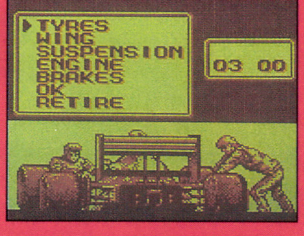

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# A FISTFUL OF FANZINE FUN FOR THE FALL

**by Arnie Katz**

Autumn—the weather is cool, the kids are back in school and the stack of fanzines is as high as a pile of leaves. That's a fancy way of saying that electronic-gaming fandom is doing very well, and more and more fanzines are entering the hobby by the day—the competiton is becoming fierce!

In fact, despite its comparatively recent origin, our fandom has become one of the largest sources of amateur periodicals. It's hard to think of a special interest or system that at least a couple of fanzines aren't covering.

Even the generous space allotted to *Fandango* by VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT's Editor Andy Eddy doesn't allow me to treat more than a handful of the many fanzines I'm receiving these days. And now, by universal request, I'll shut up and get to the reviews!

## BITz #3

**Brendt Eickstaedt**
*10610 Beacon Hill Drive*
*Franklin, WI 53132-2346*
**$1.25—Monthly**
**Ten pages**

This fanzine embodies an important lesson for all fans. The first issue wasn't very good, and it would have been easy to write off Brendt with no great shakes. How wrong that would have been! Now in its third issue, this fanzine has an impressive staff of contributors who provide material on every facet of gaming. It's also one of the better-looking fanzines, though three pages may have been a little too much of Todd Umbarger's comic strip.

The Sega Genesis stuff is particularly good. It includes a 1991 cartridge-release schedule and instructions for connecting Sega's 16-bit system to an RGB monitor. Columns present coin-op, TurboGrafx-16, Super NES and Lynx news this time. The editor promises computer gaming and overseas news in the next issue, so it's clear that he's aiming for comprehensive coverage.

If you haven't seen *BITz*, it's time to give it a try. If you got the debut issue, you should see the tremendous improvement in what is now one of the best fanzines around.

## Portable Entertainment #1

**Cameron Jacobs**
*28 Starling Court*
*Brampton, Ontario L6Z 3P5*
*CANADA*
**65¢ (Canadian)—Monthly**
**Six pages**

I don't know if this is Canada's first electronic-gaming fanzine, but it's certainly a good representative from our northern neighbor. It's packed with news about the Game Boy, Lynx, TurboExpress and Game Gear, by a group of fans who really seem to know their subject. Senior Editor Chadwick Severn, with a little help from Springboard's *Newsroom Pro*, has designed an attractive format that is easy to read. With a little practice, future issues should have even more eye-appeal, and the content is already on the right track. Fans of the portable systems will like this one.

## Hard Rock Arcade #7

**Frank Eva**
*7570 S. Manor Ave.*
*Oak Creek, WI 53154*
**$2.00—Frequent**
**Eight pages**

It's heartening to see new fanzines coming along so well, but let's not forget the mainstays of the hobby. Although *Hard Rock Arcade* has fine-tuned its editorial formula several times—it now concentrates on home computer and video games—the quality has never dipped below Frank Eva's high standard. *Hard Rock Arcade* is a literate and intelligent publication that never talks down to the reader. No fanzine is better for sophisticated discussion of hardware and software.

### WHAT IS FANDOM?

Electronic-gaming fandom is a like a club, but with no rules, dues or membership requirements except a love of interactive electronic entertainment and the desire to participate. Fans are intelligent people who share an interest in games and like to trade opinions with others.

Among the most popular forms of fan activity are editing, writing and reading limited circulation amateur publications we call fanzines. Fanzines allow fans to exchange views on all aspects of the topic.

The logical way to sample the delights of electronic-gaming fandom is to send for sample copies of one or more of the fanzines mentioned in *Fandango*. Read a few, and see if you catch the spirit.

Most fanzines are available for a letter of comment on the previous issue, contribution of artwork or written material, trade for other fanzines or, of course, cash. And don't be impatient if it takes six-to-eight weeks to get a response. Remember, this is a hobby and everyone is writing and publishing in spare time.

### ATTENTION FANZINE READERS

The Fanzine Readers List is available to any fanzine editor who sends a self-addressed stamped envelope. It's a great way to start your own mailing list of possible subscribers. If you want your name and address included on the list, simply write and ask. In either case, here's the address: Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

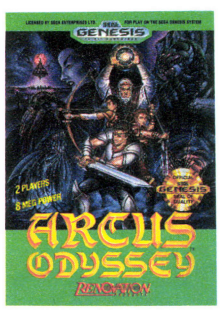
You can now get the Fanzine List from Arnie Katz (see address above), also available for a self-addressed stamped envelope. It contains the name, address, price and a brief description of content for dozens of current electronic-gaming fanzines. If you want to get into this fast-growing hobby, send for the list and try some sample copies of the ones that sound best.

### MEGAGAMING

The biweekly "Voice of Electronic Gaming," produced by Arnie Katz, Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley, contains news and commentary from a behind-the-scenes perspective. It features reviews of current fanzines and an advice column for novice (and experienced) fanzine editors. For a four-issue trial subscription, send $5 to *Megagaming*, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

# IT'S TIME TO LEARN A THING OR TWO ABOUT FUN.

Professional gamer David Izat knows a lot about fun and games, especially with Arcus Odyssey. Equipped with 8 meg graphic power, Arcus Odyssey is pure strategy. With up to four warriors (two warriors per game) work your way through daring levels and mind boggling mazes, and as you master each level, your weapons become stronger. Challenge your mind by finding hidden clues; reward yourself with hidden treasures. Now that you've learned the basics, ask the ultimate question; are you ready to learn a thing or two about fun?

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CIRCLE #150 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

COMPUTER STRATEGIES

## Taking Up Bill Elliott's NASCAR Challenge

**KONAMI**
**Versions: Amiga, IBM PC, Macintosh**

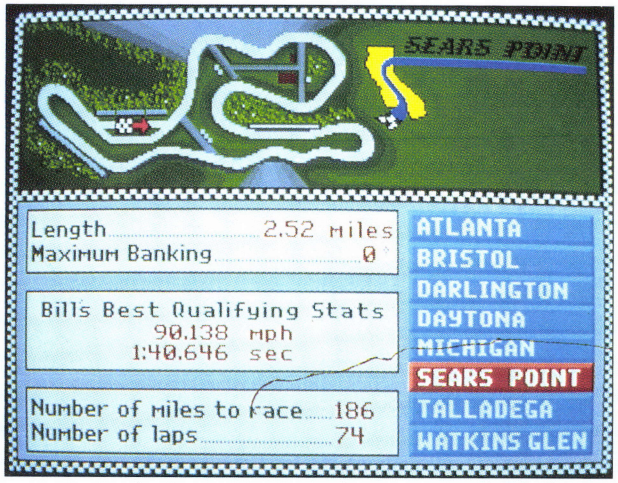
A hot stick or a cool head alone will not prevail on the Winston Cup circuit. What you need to become a symbiotic meshing of man and machine is an intimate knowledge of your own driving ability and a keen appreciation of your automobile. Add an intimate knowledge of each of the tracks to be faced and victory becomes possible.

*Bill Elliott's NASCAR Challenge* models the entire Winston Cup circuit, from the super speedways like Daytona, Talladega and Darlington to the road tracks like Sears Point and Watkins Glen. Each raceway requires different driving strategies and mechanical modifications to one's vehicle in order to obtain optimum performance. That translates as: don't expect to beat Bill Elliott at his own game without a lot of effort and trial and error.

This game is infinitely more challenging than anything else in this genre. To help the player achieve as much satisfaction as possible while avoiding frustration, here's a complete model for the Daytona setup, as well as some specific and generic guidance to deduce the best approach for the other tracks.

First, a quick lesson on the parameters that may be modified on these stock cars. These apply regardless of the make or model of the car. For example, you can choose the Ford Thunderbird, the "most winning" car on the circuit.

The first variable or factor to be manipulated is the tire stagger—the difference in diameter between the inner and outer tires when racing on banked tracks (Sears Point and Watkins Glen will use zero stagger). Increasing the stagger will increase the amount the car pulls to the inside. This is good on turns but can be detrimental in the straightaway. The second factor is the top gear ratio, which affects both the rate of acceleration and the maximum speed. Lowering the gear ratio yields the best top speed but the slowest acceleration coming out of turns, so consider the track closely when evaluating this setting.



The final factor on performance is the setting of the spoiler angle. Increasing the spoiler angle provides more down force on the rear end, which aids in cornering ability (set highest for Sears Point and Watkins Glen) but does so with a corresponding reduction in the maximum speed, due to increased aerodynamic drag.

Now, having said all that, analyze the baseline track: Daytona, a classic tri-oval course with a 31-degree banking in the east and west turns and an 18-degree banking at the start/finish line. Take as a given that the optimum configuration for Daytona is a stagger of 1.5, spoiler angle of 21 and a top gear ratio of 3.1.

Using the Talladega track as a point of comparison (the fastest super speedway in the world, with a 33-degree banking), one might consider the following adjustments as appropriate. Given that the straightaways are 16 miles longer, acceleration can be a factor coming out of the curves, so raise the top gear ratio slightly. Second, since the banking is a little more severe, it's possible to lower the tire stagger and spoiler angle a little to maintain equal cornering ability and increase the top speed to compensate for what was lost by raising the gear ratio. Understanding the interrelationship of these three factors is critical to mastering the circuit.

Apply the logic presented in this example for each track, refine it through trial and error and one may very well end up a Winston Cup champion.

Some hints are applicable to any race and should be obvious to anyone who has ever watched NASCAR on television.

Drafting, the process of tailing the car in front close enough that it sucks you along in the slipstream, not only conserves fuel

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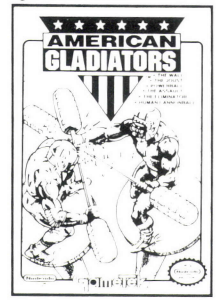


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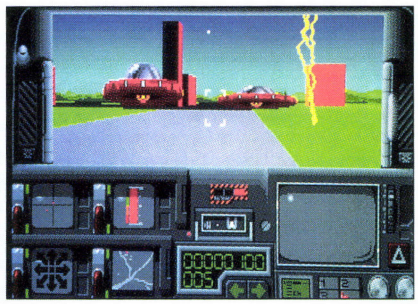
but allows a little extra accelerator that can be used to pass when the time is right.

Pit stops make or break the best driver. Fortunately, the player's pit crew never drops an air wrench at a critical moment, but races can be lost if they are improperly managed. For example, it is not wise to take on excess gas to fill the tank near the end of a race. The combination of lost time and increased weight will virtually guarantee a lost race.

Finally, always pit stop on a caution flag if possible (unless you're near the end and a pit is not needed until the finish). If no cautions occur, keep in mind that everyone should have to pit at about the same time and hang with the pack.

Follow these guidelines and you'll enjoy the thrill of going into turns in heavy traffic at speeds in excess of 200 m.p.h. It's a rush that you don't want to miss, yet one that's better felt via this great simulation than on the real highway!

—Ed Dille



## Making Mom Proud You're in HoverForce

**ACCOLADE**
**Versions: Amiga, IBM PC**

The ultimate goal of *HoverForce* is to stop a band of mutant crime lords known as Alterants from selling an addictive serum to the population of MetaCity. The player, a member of the Red Wasp unit of public enforcers, must fly an armed hovercraft, the HoverKill 1000, through the city and eliminate its criminal element. A successful player must be a good shot with each of the craft's three weapons, learn how to read its instruments and be able to maneuver the HoverKill 1000 quickly through the city.

There are three different weapons in this game: a machine gun, a cannon and a missile. The weapons are further divided by strengths, with a Type 1 machine gun graded weaker than Type 2 or 3. In general, missiles hit heavier than cannons, and machine guns are the weakest of the three. The game starts with the HoverKill 1000 armed with a Type 1 machine gun. The HoverKill can be armed with deadlier weapons, which are funded by spending money found throughout the game.

There are two basic methods to successfully use the weapons. The first is to lead a target. Fire ahead of the enemy and let him run into your shots. The other method is to follow directly behind a criminal and just fire forward. Machine guns are relatively simple to use. The other weapons can be a little tricky.

The cannon is fired from the bottom of the HoverKill and follows an arc upward and then back down to the ground. This weapon is probably the hardest to master because it can be difficult to figure out whether a criminal will be in the path of the arcing shot.

The missile system is touted as a semi-artificial intelligence system. Aim in the right general direction, fire and the missile will find a target. This can pose problems if there are multiple targets in view.

Missiles are more effective when chasing enemies and not leading them. During higher levels, when criminals dodge some shots and it's riskier to follow vehicles, fire some missiles and then lead with some cannon shots. This sometimes causes enemies to move directly away from, or toward, the HoverKill, making it easier for the missiles to hit.

On higher levels, it is more difficult to collect the evidence (canisters of serum) against the Alterants. It becomes necessary to find new ways to get evidence other than simply following the runner's ship around the city. Black canisters destroy a HoverKill, so let the enemy pick them up. An enemy blinks when it has a canister. When destroyed, the blinking enemies each leave a red canister behind.

The cruisers that divide when fired on are another source of red canisters. After they divide, destroy the two tiny saucers. They move in opposite directions, so unless they are eliminated quickly, or are located in a wide open space, it is only possible to destroy one of them. They have an erratic flight path, moving up and down, but the player should shoot them before they run into something, destroying themselves and the evidence.

The shields in the HoverKill 1000 provide some protection from the enemy. To prevent unnecessary shield damage, keep the HoverKill 1000 in motion, especially in the higher levels of the game. Enemy missiles can be outrun or outmaneuvered.

Think twice before picking up gray canisters; they provide evidence but also damage the shields. Once the shields are reduced to 25% of their maximum strength, they provide little protection for internal components or thrusters and must be repaired at a shop.

These tips won't eliminate the need to practice. But using these hints should help you halt the Alterants and save the people of MetaCity.

—John Schnyder

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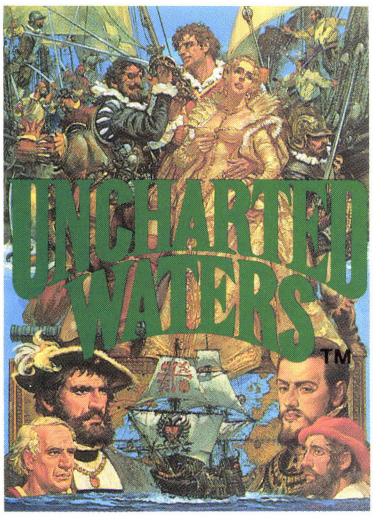
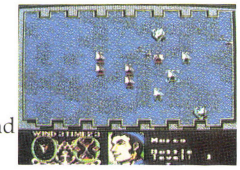
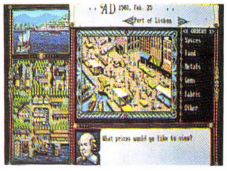



*High seas adventure and intrigue guide you through the newest role-playing game from Koei. As a young Portuguese captain in 16th century Europe, you must rescue damsels in distress, accumulate massive amounts of wealth, and restore your family honor. As your sailing skill increases, others seek you out for more important and dangerous missions. Exploring UNCHARTED WATERS, you'll discover a motley crew of thugs, villains and scallywags in some of the world's most exotic ports. Your greatest adventure will be to rescue the King's beautiful daughter. Succeed, and his Royal Highness will reward you handsomely!*

**NES Version**
- 5 Meg Cartridge
- 128K RAM
- Battery Back-Up
- Enhanced Microchip For Better Graphics And Game Play

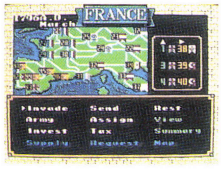


**PC Version**
- 640K
- EGA Color
- Ad-Lib Sound Board Support
- Mouse Support



# Real World Adventure.

**NES Version**
- 3 Meg Cartridge
- 128k RAM
- Battery Back-Up
- Enhanced Microchip For Better Graphics And Game Play




**PC Version**
- 640k
- EGA Color
- Ad-Lib Sound Board Support
- Mouse Support

*The battlefield becomes your passport to adventure and world domination as you assume the role of Napoleon Bonaparte. With the French revolution over, you must first gain control of France and then use your new power to conquer all of Europe. You must rule with fairness and diplomacy if you are to continue to build the empire you desire. As you become Master of those around you, men fall to their demise by your command and citizens flock to your side as you charge into battle. For, to play L'EMPEREUR, it is not enough to win a battle, you must also win the war!*

L'EMPEREUR™

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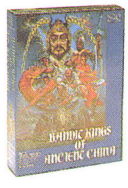
Genghis Khan

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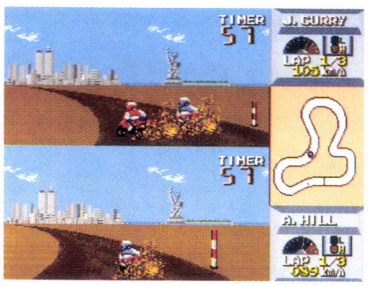
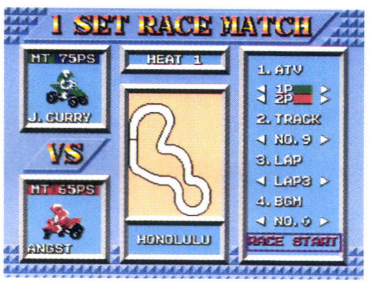
# SCRATCHING ATV BEASTS



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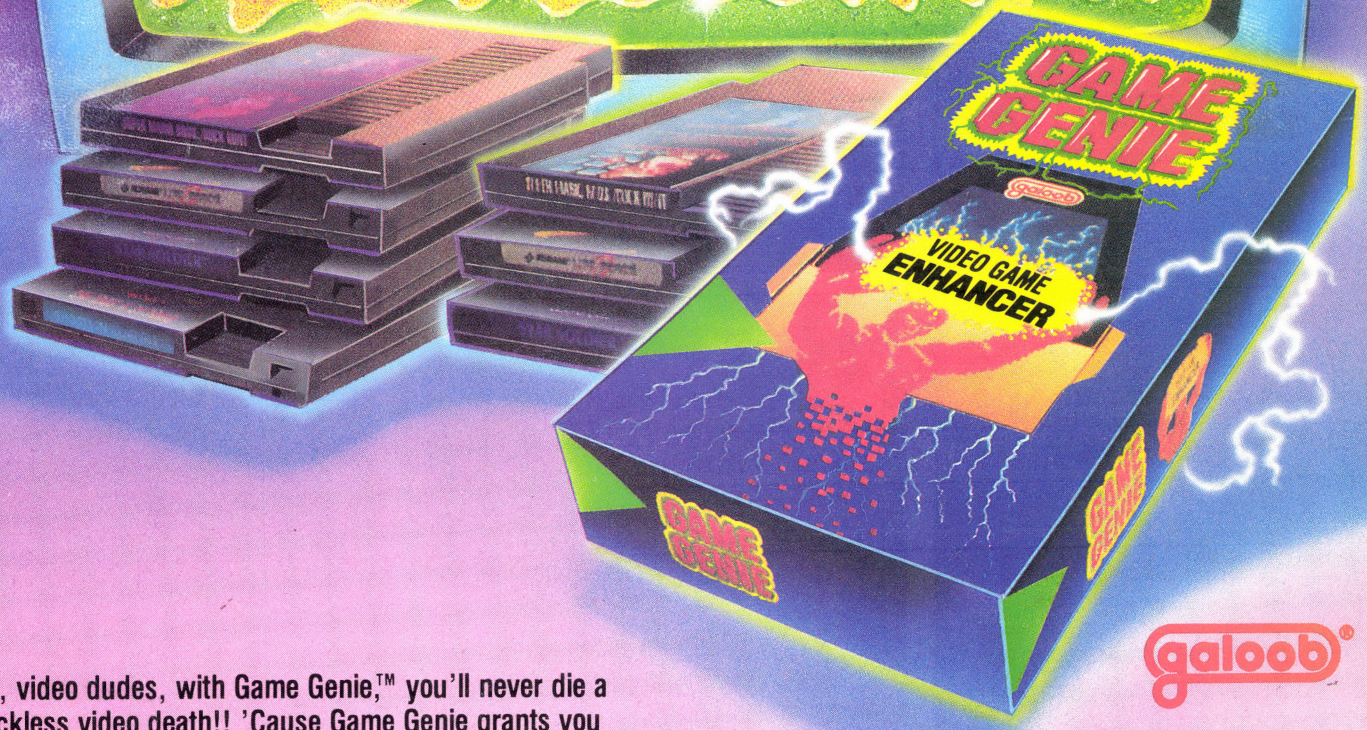
The Game Creator

# OVER 25 MILLION LIVES WILL BE SAVED




galoob®

Yo, video dudes, with Game Genie,™ you'll never die a reckless video death!! 'Cause Game Genie grants you stellar video powers on most popular video games for the Nintendo Entertainment System®.

Like, you may live forever, never die! Or, you can get unlimited firepower and super jumps!! Maybe even moonwalk the most triumphant game characters across the screen — or program them to do much more!

So you may ask, 'What is the key to this most awesome power?' The power codes, dude! Thousands of 'em that allow you to unlock all these excellent secrets!

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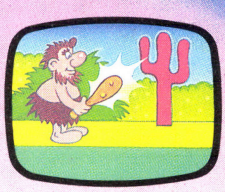
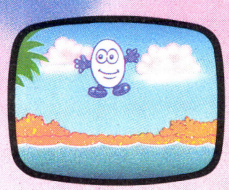
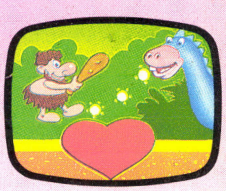


**Radical firepower.**



**Create your own effects.**



**Live forever!**

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